

# **‘ON THE SHOULDERS OF HERCULES’**

**ERASMUS, THE FROBEN PRESS AND  
THE 1516 JEROME *EDITION* IN CONTEXT**

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## NOTICE TO THE READER ABOUT TRANSLATIONS AND CITATIONS

**LATIN TRANSLATIONS:** For Latin translations of Erasmus' writings, if available I have used the translations provided by Toronto's *Collected Works of Erasmus* (hereafter the CWE), except for the rare cases when the CWE's translations could cause misunderstanding. In these cases I have changed the CWE's translations accordingly and pointed out the changes in footnotes or in the text itself. The translations of all other Latin texts are my own, unless otherwise indicated. Likewise, for all quotes from primary or secondary sources in languages other than English, any translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

**LATIN TEXTS OF JEROME'S WORKS:** For the Latin texts of Jerome's letters and other works, I have almost always used Jacques Paul Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (PL). Although I would have preferred to use the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (CSEL) and the *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CCSL) in more cases, the PL includes some texts not found in the CSEL and the CCSL, and the PL has the advantage of being online and therefore easily checked, whereas I have not always had easy access to the CSEL and the CCSL while writing this thesis. The only exception to the above rule is in chapter fourteen, in which I have used the Latin text of Jerome's works from the CSEL, since this chapter deals with rather precise textual-critical questions. I am aware of many of the differences between the PL and the CSEL and the CCSL, but I do not believe that my using the former has had or would have any substantial effect on the conclusions which I draw in this thesis.

**CITING JEROME'S LETTERS:** In order to cite Jerome's letters, it has proven simplest to adopt the traditional practice of citing Jerome's letters by their first two or three words – for example, *Audi filia* for Jerome's Letter 22 to Eustochium.

**CITATION OF ORIGINAL TEXTS IN FOOTNOTES:** In general, I have not included quotes from secondary literature in the footnotes, except on rare occasions when I believe this to be needed or especially helpful. Also, when I am citing Latin texts that are readily available in critical editions, such as P. S. Allen's *Opus epistolarum Erasmi* or Wallace K. Ferguson's critical text of Erasmus' *Vita Hieronymi Stridonensis (Life of Jerome)*, I have usually included in the footnotes only the Latin version of what I have quoted in English translation in the text. If I have not quoted any English translations in the text, I simply point out appropriate lines or pages in the footnotes where the reader can find the Latin version in the critical edition. Only when I thought it important have I left the Latin version in the footnotes even if it is not quoted in English translation in the thesis' text. For Latin texts not readily available in critical editions, however, I have usually included the whole Latin text in the footnotes, even if I have not quoted it in the body of the thesis. The reader can find many of these texts online, and in the bibliography below I have included links to many digitized versions of early printed texts.

**CITING COMMON PRIMARY TEXTS:** I shall refer to Erasmus' *Life of Jerome*, and only to this work, as the *Life*. If there is any possibility of confusion I shall add further precision, but otherwise the *Life* may be taken to mean the *Life of Jerome* found at the beginning of the first volume of Johannes Froben's 1516 *Edition* of Saint Jerome's works. For its text I have used Wallace Ferguson's critical edition published in his 1933 *Erasmi opuscula*. I shall refer to the 1516 Froben *Opera omnia* of Jerome as the *Edition* in the rest of this thesis. Whenever I think that there is any possibility of confusion, I shall refer to it as the 1516 *Edition* or the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, but unless otherwise indicated '*Edition*' may be taken to mean the 1516 Froben Jerome *Edition*.

**SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION:** For all Latin texts cited in this thesis' footnotes, I have tried to modernize and to standardize spelling and punctuation. In the appendix to this thesis, however, I have transcribed the Latin texts of different printed editions of Jerome's letters with the original punctuation and spelling.

**NON-ENGLISH NAMES AND TITLES:** This thesis includes many names, titles and sources in languages other than English, and quite often they do not have obvious English equivalents. In the end, I found that the most practical solution to this challenge was to cite all non-English names and titles in their original languages and to give translations when necessary.

**COMMONLY CITED SECONDARY WORKS:** In addition to the abbreviations of critical texts included in the bibliography, I have cited Ueli Dill's thesis by indicating the volume and the page numbers (e.g. Dill I, 1-10 means Dill's *Prolegomena*, volume 1, pages 1-10). Likewise, I have cited Toronto's *Contemporaries of Erasmus* by indicating the volume and page numbers (e. g. *Contemporaries* 3, 1-10 means *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, volume 3, pages 1-10). For the reader's convenience I have included a listed immediately below of all the primary texts which I have cited in this thesis along with the abbreviations which I have used. The bibliography of secondary literature for the whole thesis is included at the end of the thesis, before the appendix.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PRIMARY SOURCES

## CRITICAL TEXTS ACCORDING TO ABBREVIATIONS

In the below bibliography, I have cited critical texts indicated in this thesis' footnotes with their abbreviations. I have organized these texts according to their abbreviations, listed these abbreviations in alphabetical order and highlighted them in bold characters. When appropriate, below each abbreviation I have included a citation as an example.

**Allen:** *Opus epistolarum Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, volumes 1-12, edited by Percy Stafford Allen et al. Oxford: 1906-1958.

Example: Letter 396 in the *Opus epistolarum*, lines 1-10 will be cited as: Allen 396, 1-10.

**AK:** *Die Amerbachkorrespondenz*, edited by Alfred Hartmann and Beat Rudolf Jenny. Basel: Verlag der Universitätsbibliothek, 1942-1995.

Example: Letter 300 in *die Amerbachkorrespondenz*, volume 2, lines 1-10 will be cited simply as: AK 300, 1-10.

**ASD:** *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata*. Amsterdam, London, New York, Tokyo: 1969).

**BWBR:** *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus*, edited by A. Horawitz and K. Hartfelder. Leiden: Nieuwkoop, 1966).

Example: Letter 100 in the *Briefwechsel*, lines 1-10 will be cited as: BWBR 100, 1-10.

**PL:** *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina*, 221 volumes. Paris: 1841-1864.

Example: Works from the PL will be cited as: PL 22, 100. This should be read to mean: *Patrologia Latina*, volume 22, column 100.

**VH:** Erasmus. *Vita Hieronymi Stridonensis*. In *Erasmi opuscula. A supplement to the Opera Omnia*, edited by Wallace Ferguson. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1933.

Example: Lines from Erasmus' *Vita Hieronymi Stridonensis* will be cited thus: VH 1000-1010. This should be read to mean: VH, lines 1000-1010.

**Prefazioni:** Bussi, Giovanni Andrea. *Prefazioni alle edizioni di Sweynheim e Pannartz prototipografi Romani*, edited by Massimo Miglio. Milano: Il Polifilo, 1978.

**RBW:** Reuchlin, *Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel*, edited by L. Geiger. Tübingen, 1875.

Example: Letter 100 in the *Briefwechsel*, lines 1-10 will be cited as: RBW 100, 1-10.

## CRITICAL TEXTS WITHOUT ABBREVIATIONS

Erasmus. *Correspondence d'Érasme*, edited by Aloïs Gerlo. Brussels: University of Brussels Press, 1981.

Erasmus. *Vita Hieronymi Stridonensis*. In *Vita di San Girolamo*, edited and translated by Anna Morisi Guerra. L'Aquila: Japadre Editore, 1988.

Jerome. *Contra Rufinum*, edited and translated by Pierre Lardet for *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CCSL) 79. Turnhout: Brepols, 1982.

Jerome. *The Letters of Saint Jerome*, volume 1, edited by Thomas Cornerford Lawler and Charles Christopher Mierow. New York: Newman Press, 1963.

Jerome. *Trois Vies de Moines*, edited by Adalbert de Vogüé, Pierre Leclerc and Edgardo Martin Morales. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007.

Manuzio, Aldo. In *Aldo Manuzio editore*, volumes 1-2, edited by Giovanni Orlandi. Milano: Il Polifilo, 1975.

*Lettres des Premiers Chartreux*, volume 1. *Sources Chrétiennes* 88. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962.

Luther, Martin. *Annotierungen zu den Werken des Hieronymus*, edited by Martin Brecht and Christian Peters. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2000.

Luther, Martin. *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimar, 1883.

Marulus, Marcus. *Vita Divi Hieronymi*, edited by Darko Novakovic. In *Colloquia Maruliana* 3 (1994): 26-47.

Petrarch. *Familiars* 2, translated by Ugo Dotti, edited by V. Rossi. Urbino: Argalìa, 1970.

Salutati, Coluccio. *De fato et fortuna*, edited by Concetta Bianca. Firenze: Olschki, 1985.

Valla, Lorenzo. *Antidotum primum: La prima apologia contro Poggio Bracciolini*, edited by Ari Wesseling. Assen, Germany: Van Gorcum, 1978.

---. *Collatio Novi Testamenti*, edited by Alessandro Perosa. Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1970.

---. *De professione religiosorum*. In *Prosatori Latini del Quattrocento*, edited by Eugenio Garin, 566-593. Milano: R. Ricciardi, 1952.

---. *In sex libros Elegantiarum praefatio*. In *Prosatori Latini del Quattrocento*, 594-631.

*Quellen zur Geschichte des Papstums und des römischen Katholizismus*, edited by Carl Mirbt and Kurt Aland. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1967.

Quintilian. *Institution Oratoire*, edited by Jean Cousin. Paris: Belles lettres, 1975.

## INCUNABLES AND EARLY PRINTED TEXTS (NOT JEROME)

I have arranged the below list of incunables and early printed texts of works other than Jerome's letters or commentaries according to their dates. Although I did consult several copies of almost all these editions, for the final revision of this thesis I have tried, as much as possible, to use copies made available on the Internet through the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* (BSB) or other similar sources. If available online, below each listing I have cited a link to the beginning of the edition. In addition to these printed editions, I have also looked at and cited a manuscript of Jerome's letters from the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (BML) with the shelf-mark: Conv. Soppr. 300, 118.

**1485 Platina:** Platina, Bartholomeo. *Liber de vita Christi ac pontificum omnium*. Printed at Treviso in 1485 by Johannes Rubeus Vercellensis. Hain 13048. 2 Inc.c.a. 1630 at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00068575\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00068575_mets.xml)

**1492 Celtis:** Celtis, Konrad. *Panegyris ad duces Bavariae*. Printed at Augsburg in 1492 by Erhard Ratdolt. Res/4 Epist. 72 at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00042130\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00042130_mets.xml)

**1492 Ambrose:** *Opera sancti Ambrosii*. Printed at Basel in 1492 by Johannes Amerbach. Hain 896. H: D 276.2° Helmst. at the HAB. No digitization yet available.

**1494 De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis:** Trithemius, Johannes. *Liber de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*. Printed at Basel after 28 August 1494 by Johannes Amerbach. Hain 15613. Aleph D III 8:3 at the Universitätsbibliothek Basel (UBB).

<http://www.e-rara.ch/doi/10.3931/e-rara-10648>

**1495 Zacchia:** Laudivius Hierosolymitanus (Laudivio Zacchia). *De vita beati Hieronymi*. Printed at Rome in 1495 by Johannes Besicken. BHL 3877. 4 Inc.c.a. 1222 at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00061739\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00061739_mets.xml)

**1495 Vulgate:** *Biblia cum Glossa ordinaria et Postilla litteralis de Nicolao de Lyra*. Printed at Venice on 18 April 1495 by Paganino de' Paganini. 2 Inc.s.a. 211 f-1 at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00048386\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00048386_mets.xml)

**1495-1496 Theocritus:** Theocritus. *Idyllia*. Printed at Venice in 1495-1496 by Aldus Manutius. Res/2 A.lat.a. 6 at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00050761\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00050761_mets.xml)

**1496 Filelfo:** Filelfo, Francesco. *Epistolae*. Printed at Basel before July 1496 by Johannes Amerbach. DE VII 23:3 at the UBB.

[http://www.e-rara.ch/bau\\_1/content/titleinfo/4687899](http://www.e-rara.ch/bau_1/content/titleinfo/4687899)

**1497-1498 Maniacutia:** Maniacutia, Nicolaus. *Beati Hieronymi vita*. Included in 1497-1498 Venetian edition, whose details are in the entry immediately below this one. BHL 3873.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00054069\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00054069_mets.xml)

**1497-1498 Venetian:** *Opera divi Hieronymi*. Edited by Bernardino Gadolo. Printed at Venice from 1497-1498 by Gregorio de' Gregoriis. Prop. Fid. 178 at BAV. 2 Inc.c.a. 3486-1 at BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00054069\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00054069_mets.xml)

**1497 Schedel:** Schedel, Hartmann. *Liber Chronicorum*. Printed at Ausburg before February 1497. 2 Inc.c.a. 3536 m at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00044259\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00044259_mets.xml)

**1498 Poliziano:** Poliziano, Angelo. *Opera omnia*. Printed at Venice in 1498 by Aldus Manutius. 2 Inc.c.a. 3680 m at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00050563\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00050563_mets.xml)

**1503 Origen:** *Origenis homiliae*. Printed at Venice in 1503 by Aldus Manutius. Aldine 106 at the Nazionale Marciana (NM). No digitization yet available.

**1504 Saepe a me:** Jerome. Letter 1, *Saepe a me*. Printed at Leipzig in 1504. 4 P.lat. 591 m at BSB.

<http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10990452.html>

**1505 Pio:** Pio, Giovanni Battista. *Annotamenta Ioannis Baptistae Pii Bononiensis*. Printed at Bologna in 1505. 4 TH POLEM 86/69 2 at Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen (UBG). Not digitization yet available.

**1505 Valla:** Valla, Lorenzo. *Elegantiae de lingua latina*. Printed at Venice in 1505. 2 L.lat. 158 at the BSB.

<http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10147622.html>

**1506 Ambrose:** *Divi Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis omnia opera*. Edited by Conrad Leontorius. Printed at Basel in 1506 by Johannes Petri. 4 P.lat. 42-1 at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00008238\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00008238_mets.xml)

**1506 Volterrano:** Maffei, Raffaele. *Commentariorum urbanorum octo et triginta libri*. Printed at Rome in 1506.

**1506 Beroaldo:** Suetonius. *Vitae Caesarum*. Edited by Filippo Beroaldo. Printed at Venice in 1506. 2 A.lat.b. 698 at the BSB.

[http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10140944\\_00001.html](http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10140944_00001.html)

**1508 Crinito:** Crinito, Pietro. *De honesta disciplina*. Printed at Paris in 1508. 2 P.lat. 1233 at the BSB.

<http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10149113.html>

**1510 Biondo:** Biondo, Flavio. *Italia Illustrata: De Roma instaurata*. Printed at Venice in 1510 by Gregorio de' Gregoriis. 2 A.lat.b. 483 at BSB.

<http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10144277.html>

**1512 Beroaldo:** Beroaldo, Filippo. *Philippi Beroaldi in asinum aureum Lucii Apuleii commentaria*. Printed at Paris in 1512. 2 A.lat.b. 495 at BSB.

<http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10140565.html>

**1514 Hieronymianus:** Andrea, Giovanni. *Hieronymianus*. Published at Vienna in 1514 by Leonhard Alentseus. P.lat. 801 at the BSB.

[http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb11012231\\_00001.html](http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb11012231_00001.html)

**1515 Seneca:** *Lucubrationes omnes*. Edited by Erasmus. Printed at Basel in 1516 by Johannes Froben. 2 A.lat.b 632 at the BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00001908\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00001908_mets.xml)

**1516 Legenda Aurea:** De Voragine, Jacobus. *Legenda Aurea*. Printed at Oringau in 1516 by Johannes Rynman. 2 P.lat. 407 at the BSB.

[http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10943314\\_00001.html](http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10943314_00001.html)

**1516 Froben New Testament:** *Novum instrumentum omne*. Edited by Erasmus. Printed at Basel in 1516 by Johannes Froben. BibG B 3 at the UBB.

<http://www.e-rara.ch/doi/10.3931/e-rara-2849>

**1516 Ambrose:** *Opera divi Ambrosii*. Edited by Andreas Cratander (Hartmann). Printed at Basel in 1516 by Adam Petri. H: D 279.2° Helmst at the HAB. Partial digitization available from BSB at:

[https://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/InfoGuideClient/singleHit.do?methodToCall=showHit&curPos=2&identifier=-1\\_FT\\_2039605285&tab=showWeblinksActive](https://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/InfoGuideClient/singleHit.do?methodToCall=showHit&curPos=2&identifier=-1_FT_2039605285&tab=showWeblinksActive)

**1519 Froben New Testament:** *Novum Testamentum*. Edited by Erasmus. Printed at Basel in 1519 by Johannes Froben. Res/2 B.gr. 4-3 or 2 Exeg. 192 at BSB. No full digitization yet available.

**1526 Annotationes:** Valla, Lorenzo. *In Novum Testamentum adnotationes*. Printed at Basel in 1526 by Andreas Cratander. P.lat. 1975 at the BSB.

<http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10189073.html>

**1530 Volterrano:** Maffei, Raffaele. *Commentariorum urbanorum octo et triginta libri*. Printed at Basel in 1530 by Hieronymus Froben. X. 15.14 at Malta's National Library.



## INCUNABLES AND EARLY PRINTED TEXTS (JEROME)

I have listed below the common early printed texts of Jerome's letters that I shall be using and citing in this edition, with their abbreviations in bold characters. For details about other prior printed editions of Jerome's letters please see Dill I, 43-55. See also Lardet, *Contra Rufinum*, 198-219, and Albinia Catherine De La Mare and Lotte Hellinga, 'The First Printed Book in Oxford', 230-237 (full citations in bibliography of secondary sources).

**1468 Riessinger:** With Teodore Lelli's commentaries. Printed at Rome by Sixtus Riessinger, c. 1468. Hain 8550. 2 Inc.s.a. 641-1 at BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00064262\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00064262_mets.xml)

**1468 Roman:** Edited by Giovanni Andrea Bussi. Printed at Rome by Conrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz in late 1468. Hain 8551. No digitization yet available.

**1470 Roman:** Edited by Bussi. Printed at Rome by Conrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz in 1470. Hain 8552. 2 Inc.c.a. 31, 1-2 at BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00064261\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00064261_mets.xml)

**1470 Schöffer:** Edited by Adrianus de Brielis. Printed in two separate runs at Mainz in 1470. Hain 8553; 8554. 2 Inc.c.a. 30 a at BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00043092\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00043092_mets.xml)

**1497 Kessler:** Printed at Basel by Nicholas Kessler in 1497. Hain 8566. No full digitization yet available.

**1508 Saccon:** With Lelli's commentaries. Printed at Lyon by Jacques Saccon in 1508. No digitization yet available.

**1516 Froben Jerome Edition:** With Erasmus' commentaries. Printed at Basel by Johannes Froben in 1516. 2 P.lat 700, 1-9 at BSB.

[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00019134\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00019134_mets.xml)

# FOREWORD

With the title of this thesis, ‘On the Shoulders of Hercules’, I have tried to capture the main idea that inspired and has sustained my analysis of Erasmus’ efforts for the 1516 Froben *Edition* of Saint Jerome’s collected works over the past three years; namely, that Erasmus and other like-minded humanists of his age lived, thought and wrote within a long-standing scholarly tradition that stretched back to Antiquity and remained very much alive, if embattled, in the Mediaeval period. To my knowledge, Bernard of Chartres, a twelfth-century cleric and scholar, first coined the now well-known phrase ‘to stand on the shoulders of giants’.<sup>1</sup> Erasmus and his colleagues at Johannes Froben’s press at Basel would not have been able to accomplish what they did without the great labours that other prior editors, correctors, scribes and scholars had undertaken, whatever and despite their mistakes and misinterpretations, in order to pass down and to improve the texts of Jerome’s works.

Mediaeval and Renaissance scholarship and culture all borrowed widely, albeit differently, from something that we can justly call the European ‘Classical Tradition’. This tradition comprised the continued reading, teaching, study and interpretation of ‘canonical’ texts from all genres of surviving antique Latin, and later Greek, literature. In this thesis I shall try to explain an important example of Erasmus’ engagement with, use of and contribution to the European Classical Tradition by looking at his work on the 1516 Jerome *Edition* in two ways. Firstly, I shall consider ‘Erasmus as historian’, treating his *Life of Jerome*, a biography of the saint that introduced the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, and showing its debts to and differences from prior historical scholarship and hagiography. Second, I shall look at ‘Erasmus as editor’, explaining his textual criticism and commentaries for the 1516

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<sup>1</sup> For this attribution see John of Salisbury’s *Metalogicon* in PL 199, 900 C: Dicebat Bernardus Carnotensis nos esse quasi nanos, gigantium humeris incidentes, ut possimus plura eis et remotiora videre, non utique proprii visus acumine, aut eminentia corporis, sed quia in altum subvehimur et extollimur magnitudine gigantea.

*Edition* and comparing its achievements with that of its printed and manuscript forebears. We shall see that the efforts of scholars working in less than ideal circumstances kept many important ideas and accomplishments of the Classical Tradition alive for their Renaissance descendants. Erasmus relied on the ‘Herculean labours’ of prior Mediaeval and Renaissance scholars and stood on their shoulders as he undertook his many editorial projects for the Froben press.

In undertaking this work I have, in my turn, stood squarely on the shoulders of three modern scholars who have treated the 1516 Jerome *Edition* in detail: Benedetto Clausi, Ueli Dill and Hilmar Pabel. Although I have not yet been able to meet with Benedetto Clausi, I have had the pleasure of speaking with Ueli Dill on several occasions at Basel. Without fail he has been most helpful and generous with his time. He even sent me an electronic copy of his 2004 doctoral thesis on the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, entitled *Prolegomena zu einer Edition von Erasmus von Rotterdam*, which has proven a priceless resource.<sup>2</sup> This thesis includes much of Dr. Dill’s work in preparation for a new critical edition of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, and there is no other secondary source that I have cited so often in my own thesis. Hilmar Pabel’s monograph *Herculean Labours* has obviously inspired this thesis’ title. When I first read his book over two years ago, I decided to continue down the paths of research that Professor Pabel began and carried out with skill and moderation in his 2008 monograph. He kindly took time from his many obligations to read over an early draft of this thesis’ first chapter, and he gave me many detailed and helpful comments. These three scholars each wrote in the 2000s and in answer to a sizeable body of modern scholarly literature about the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, almost all of which has focused on Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome*. In order fully to understand the implications of this thesis, we do need some knowledge of their work and of

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<sup>2</sup> Ueli Dill, ‘Prolegomena zu einer Edition von Erasmus von Rotterdam, *Scholia in Epistolas Hieronymi*’ (Doctoral thesis, University of Basel, 2004).

the body of scholarly literature as it stood before the achievements of Clausi, Dill and Pabel. I have therefore summed up this literature in the introduction to this thesis' first part.

I hope that the reader will see more method than madness in this thesis, because there are three methods which I have tried to implement throughout its composition. Firstly, I have tried to follow Hilmar Pabel's call at the end of his *Herculean Labours* by going back, as much as possible, *ad fontes*; that is, to the primary sources in the original languages. My *Doktorvater*, Anthony Grafton, also strongly encouraged this approach, and I have built the core of my arguments and my observations from detailed reading of the 1516 Froben Jerome *Edition* and related works by Erasmus, by his colleagues and by scholars from Jerome's time until Erasmus'. Second, I have tried to follow in Erasmus' footsteps by travelling to scholarly libraries and institutes throughout Europe. My thesis has been deeply shaped by experiences and by findings at countless libraries from England to Italy. Two libraries that were not at first obvious choices to me ended up having the most lasting impact on this thesis. In my attempts to follow Erasmus' footsteps in Venice, I had the great privilege of staying at the Cini Foundation's residence on the island San Giorgio, first in November 2011 and later from December 2012 until March 2013, where I finished editing the reader's copy of this thesis. In late 2011, in a book belonging to the Foundation's Grasseti collection, I found an early printed copy of the fifteenth-century Ligurian humanist Laudivio Zacchia's life of Jerome bound together with a Renaissance life of the Virgin Mary. This finding inspired me to look more closely at Italian humanist scholarship on Jerome and changed the thrust of the first part of this thesis. This thesis was likewise changed by an afternoon at Selestat's Humanist Library in January 2011, when I first saw Beatus Rhenanus' copy of the 1508 Saccon edition of Jerome's letters. This afternoon laid the foundations for the core ideas of this thesis' second part, in which I try to explain Erasmus' activity as an editor. Third, during these travels throughout Europe, I have sought the input and the advice of scholars of Renaissance history,

from fellow doctoral students to well-established and famous academics. Such input has greatly marked this thesis.

In writing this thesis I have piled up regrets, and I have not been able to do all that I would have liked to do. I had, for example, gathered quite a bit of information about representations of Jerome in the plastic arts in the Renaissance, from famous museums of art to the wine-making facilities of Roncade's Castello Giustiniani, where the Baron Vincenzo Ciani-Bassetti most graciously hosted me in January 2013. I could have made better use of this material, but limits of time and of knowledge kept me from fitting it into my thesis in the best possible way. I also regret not having been able to undertake more careful investigation of Erasmus' debt to Mediaeval scholarship for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. It would not have been terribly hard, for instance, to read popular Mediaeval commentaries such as the *Glossa ordinaria* or Gratian's *Decretals* and to compare them with Erasmus' commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*. In the end, however, I found myself running out of time and far over my ideal length to undertake this study. Of my many regrets, the last that I shall bring up here is my poor Hebrew and my all but non-existent Greek. Had I been more *trilinguis* when writing this thesis, I would have been better equipped to understand and to explain Erasmus' work for the 1516 *Edition* and to put it in a more complete context. Perhaps the appendix to this thesis, in which I have transcribed many of Erasmus' *scholia*, will allow abler scholars to make connections which were beyond me.

I had also planned to include a third part to this thesis entitled, 'Erasmus as Jerome?' In this part I wished to qualify many claims about Erasmus' so-called 'self-identification' with Jerome. Contrary to what we see in much secondary literature about Erasmus' *Life of Jerome*, I do not believe that Erasmus' enthusiasm for and self-identification with Jerome was much greater or more important than what we see in the writings and in the lives of prior

humanist scholars such as Cardinal Bessarion, Ambrogio Traversari and Lorenzo Valla. What is more, from a comparison of Erasmus' and Jerome's writings about Church discipline and theology, I think that on most important questions relating to Christian life and belief (e.g. fasting, marriage and re-marriage, widowhood, pilgrimage and relics, riches in the Church), Jerome and Erasmus actually disagreed with each other or at least had clearly different priorities. I do present some evidence supporting this idea over the course of my thesis. At the end of the day, however, my first two parts grew to a size that I had not foreseen, and I did not think it responsible to inflict another 100 or more pages on the readers of this thesis nor, given my upcoming commitments to undertake active-duty service with the U.S. Army, did I have the time to get these pages up to scholarly par. I hope to be able to use this material in the future, and in the meantime I hope that their absence from this thesis does not take anything away from its most important points.

Here I shall sum up what I think were the 1516 Jerome *Edition*'s most remarkable accomplishments. Firstly, I believe that in addition to being the first *Opera omnia* ('Collected Works') of Jerome, the 1516 *Edition* was the first critical edition of Jerome's works. It made some substantial improvements to the Latin text and an effort to restore Greek passages in Jerome's works that was theretofore without precedent. Second, the 1516 *Edition* was the first printed edition of Jerome's letters to include detailed commentaries on them – to my knowledge, it was one of the first printed editions to include comprehensive learned commentary in the humanist style on the works of any Church Father. With these commentaries, Erasmus brought many problematic passages in Jerome's letters, some of which are still debated today, to the attention of contemporary readers and scholars. These commentaries were also a treasure-trove of literary, historical and philological information, and Erasmus wrote them with a mind to support his larger polemical goals in the 1516 *Edition* and in his other contemporaneous works. Third, the 1516 *Edition* was an excellent work of

propaganda and publicity for Christian humanism, especially in Northern Europe. The 1516 *Edition* proudly advertised its underlying editorial methods, taken in part from fifteenth-century Italian humanists. What is more, the 1516 *Edition* presented the Church Fathers and Classical *bonae litterae* ('good letters') as essential to the purification and the renewal of Christian life and practice. Erasmus was an outstanding publicist and promoter of Christian humanism, and with the 1516 *Edition* he tirelessly promoted his vision for the *res publica Christiana* ('the Christian Republic'), which reached readers as different and opposed as Dr. Martin Luther and Pope Leo X, who both owned copies of the *Edition*. Fourth, the 1516 *Edition* is a masterpiece of organization and presentation. Although we see precedents in Aldus Manutius' works as well as in those of contemporary Basel printers, such as Johannes Amerbach, the 1516 *Edition* included detailed tables of contents which were as complete as they were easy to use. Perhaps more importantly, the 1516 *Edition* was an extremely handsome edition. Its appearance broke decidedly with prior printed editions of Jerome's letters, which all imitated the look of manuscripts. It is a fine example of the remarkable changes in printing and editorial methods that took hold in Erasmus' lifetime and made the printed book something other than the simple reproduction of manuscripts with a new technology. Along with his colleagues at Basel and elsewhere, Erasmus was one of the foremost agitators in this revolutionary application of the technology of print, and in many ways the 1516 *Edition* embodied this revolution.

When speaking of my thesis with many colleagues, I have often been surprised to get the impression that I am critical of or somehow 'harsh on' Erasmus. This has surprised me because Erasmus is one of my favourite scholars of all time, and I do not believe that this thesis presents his work in a negative light. Perhaps my attitude is owing to what Erasmus represents to me, and I do not believe that I should hide this. To me Erasmus does not embody a break from a Mediaeval tradition or a 'proto-modern' intellectual dealing as best he could

with the shackles of his age's superstition. Instead, I see Erasmus as an extremely pious Catholic Christian who wrote with equal force against the barbarity and hopelessness of pagan Antiquity as he did against the worldliness and the hypocrisy of his contemporary religious authorities and secular rulers. When he was writing for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* and for most of the work that we shall see in this thesis, I doubt that he or many other contemporaries could have foreseen anything like the consequences of Dr. Martin Luther's revolt against Rome and the ensuing split in Western Christianity. Erasmus' was a spirit formed in and made for a time in which, despite all its problems, the spiritual unity of Western Christianity was taken for granted. As Dr. Richard Scholar, whose acquaintance I had the privilege to make at the Cini Foundation in January 2013, put it in one of our conversations on San Giorgio's island, before Luther, Catholics did argue about and fight violently over positions, prestige and priorities: such arguments could and did lead to war and to schism. It was not until the Reformation, however, that basic Catholic policies, such as auricular confession and episcopal authority, were attacked and demonized on a large scale as fundamentally wrong and anti-Christian. Most probably I am simplifying Dr. Scholar's arguments, but I do believe that in order to understand Erasmus, we must understand that he was over fifty years old before anyone had ever dreamt of something such as Luther's Reformation, to which he never lent his support and which he opposed until his death. Erasmus' contemporaries criticized him for laying the egg that Luther hatched, but when we keep in mind the broader context of Renaissance scholarship and religious life, such accusations are hard to accept. Whatever the egg Luther hatched, it was one laid by prelates, professors, preachers and Popes long before Erasmus ever gained prominence in early sixteenth-century Europe.

At least, such are my own conclusions after a few years of immersion with Erasmus and with his writings. My emphasis on the continuities between Erasmus' scholarship and that of forebears is not to take away from his undoubted accomplishments, and it is surely not my



wish to belittle his scholarship by stressing moments when he fell short of the bar he and other humanist scholars set. Instead, in order to understand and better to appreciate what Erasmus truly accomplished, I believe that we must also understand what he clearly inherited from others and what he clearly did not do himself. Before turning to the Erasmian *fontes*, however, I shall first review claims that prior modern scholars have made about him and about his work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.

# INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I shall make claims that go against the grain of much existing secondary literature about Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* and about his work for the 1516 Froben Jerome *Edition*.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, I shall first treat in detail many outstanding arguments of this secondary literature. For those not especially worried about its knottier points and repetitions, here I shall also sum up this literature's main ideas. Notwithstanding that they do not see eye-to-eye on everything, scholars of the 1516 Jerome *Edition* have widely agreed on several points. The first of these is that Erasmus' *Life* was one of the first biographies of any saint which showed evidence of a 'critical' method of writing history. The second is that this *Life* was in many ways, and for an array of possible reasons, meant to portray Erasmus himself, and was therefore 'autobiographical' as well as 'biographical'. Given this 'special bond' between Erasmus and Jerome, the third idea about which most scholars of the *Edition* agree is that Jerome also held a 'special place' in Erasmus' larger project to bring change (or 'reform') to the Catholic Church by drawing it closer to older and purer Christian practice and theology. The fourth idea is that Erasmus tried to encourage a healthy combination of godly and worldly learning in order to foster a 'rebirth' of Christian life and letters in his own day, taking his inspiration from examples found in the writings of the Church Fathers of late Antiquity.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis will address more thoroughly problems that Benedetto Clausi has pointed out in such conclusions and in the scholarly literature as it now stands. In his *Ridar voce*

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<sup>3</sup> As indicated in the above 'Notice to the Reader', I shall refer to Erasmus' *Life of Jerome*, and only to this work, as the *Life*. If there is any possibility of confusion I shall add further precision, but otherwise the *Life* may be taken to mean the *Life of Jerome* found at the beginning of the first volume of Johannes Froben's 1516 *Edition* of Saint Jerome's works. Likewise, I shall refer to the 1516 Froben *Opera omnia* of Jerome as the *Edition* in this introduction and in the rest of this thesis. Whenever I think that there is any possibility of confusion, I shall refer to it as the 1516 *Edition* or the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the importance of the Church Fathers to Erasmus and to his humanist contemporaries, see Eugene Rice, 'The Humanist Idea of Christian Antiquity: Lefèvre d'Étaples and his Circle', in *Studies in the Renaissance* 9 (1962): 126-160.

*all'antico padre*, Clausi argues that Wallace Ferguson's inclusion of the *Life* in his 1933 *Erasmi opuscula* (*Works of Erasmus*) has fostered a 'warped' view of the *Life* which does not take into account the context of its publication.<sup>5</sup> Clausi points out the tendency of 'today's specialists from Ferguson on' to treat Erasmus' *Life* in isolation from Jerome's as well as from Erasmus' writings.<sup>6</sup> Clausi's work also includes detailed treatments of Erasmus' scholarship for the 1516 *Edition* and especially of Erasmus' comments on and textual corrections of Jerome's letter *Adversus Iovinianum* (*Against Jovinian*). He does not, however, undertake the research and the textual analysis needed to set the *Life* in a complete context.

After this review of the scholarly debate about the *Life* and about Erasmus' Patristic scholarship, this thesis is divided into two parts. The first part treats 'Erasmus as Historian' and aims to set his *Life* in a broader context, comparing it with lives of Jerome that date from late Antiquity up to Erasmus' own lifetime. From this analysis we shall see noteworthy continuities between Erasmus' *Life* and a prior biographical tradition in which Christian writers undertook to put together an accurate life of the saint. In the second part of this thesis we shall treat 'Erasmus as Editor and Commentator'. By looking more closely at Erasmus' work for the *Edition* and by comparing its text with several other important editions of Jerome's letters printed before 1516, we shall see that Erasmus' editorial work for the *Edition*, although important, was not as radical a departure from prior printed editions as he, his colleagues and his supporters claimed. For these purposes it would be ideal to look at all Jerome's letters and at all Erasmus' commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*, but in order to come up with a manageable and presentable sampling I looked mostly at Jerome's letters that

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<sup>5</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce all'antico padre* (Soveria Mannelli, Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2000), 95-96. Wallace K. Ferguson, *Erasmi opuscula. A supplement to the Opera Omnia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1933). Hereafter I shall cite the Ferguson's edition as the *Erasmi opuscula*. For Ferguson's introductory article see pages 125-133. For the Latin text of the *Vita Hieronymi Stridonensis* (*Life of Jerome*), see pages 134-190. Hereafter I shall cite Ferguson's critical text of the *Life* as 'VH' with the appropriate lines to follow (e.g. VH 1-3).

<sup>6</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 97. Hilmar Pabel, *Herculean Labours* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008).

Erasmus explicitly cites in his *Life* as well as at his commentaries on these letters, using other letters and primary sources for evidence when they are needed and especially helpful.

## AN OVERVIEW OF SECONDARY LITERATURE

In 1933, Wallace K. Ferguson published his *Erasmi opuscula* that holds one of only two readily available Latin texts of the *Life*.<sup>7</sup> Before this edition, the text of Erasmus' *Life* was often not readily available to scholars since it was left out of the Leclerc edition of Erasmus' *Collected Works* printed and published at Leiden from 1703 to 1706. In the foreword to his critical Latin text of the *Life*, Ferguson praises the *Life* for its pioneering scholarship:

...the *Vita* is one of the finest examples of Erasmus' scholarly work. It represents a new departure in the field of Christian biography...It is far removed indeed from the saints' lives of the Middle Ages...Erasmus was determined to restore the portrait of the historical Jerome with all his real faults, but especially with his real virtues, which were not those ascribed to him by Mediaeval hagiography.<sup>8</sup>

After citing at length Erasmus' own words about the principles that guided him as he wrote his *Life*, and at which we shall look below, Ferguson tells us:

...on this scholarly plan the work was carried out with the utmost fidelity. For all the doubtful or important points the author cites his authority. His interpretation of Jerome's character is sympathetic but just, and his facts in the main remarkably accurate. The occasional uncertainty as to chronology is but a slight and perhaps unavoidable blemish on a work of careful and judicious scholarship.<sup>9</sup>

Given when Ferguson put pen to paper, it is not terribly surprising that he praised the *Life* by emphasizing the break from 'Mediaeval hagiography' which it represented to him. Publishing his *Erasmi Opuscula* only two years after the publication of Herbert Butterfield's groundbreaking *Whig Interpretation of History*, for Ferguson to fit Erasmus' *Life* into a larger, 'whiggish' narrative about the development of 'modern' historical thought makes better sense if we keep in mind when and where he put together the *Erasmi opuscula*. For Ferguson, citing

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<sup>7</sup> The other is Anna Morisi Guerra's 1977 edition with her Italian translation and notes. See Anna Morisi Guerra, ed. *Vita di San Girolamo* (L'Aquila: Japadre Editore, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> *Erasmi opuscula*, 129.

<sup>9</sup> *Erasmi opuscula*, 130.

contemporary authorities and evidence, giving readers a ‘just’ sketch of the individual in question and sticking to known facts are all mainstays of real history-writing and of any biography worthy of the name. Ferguson saw all these features in Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome* and therefore labelled it a pioneering work of history that represented a clear break with prior hagiographical and biographical traditions.

Historians after Ferguson have largely taken up and repeated his analysis of Erasmus’ *Life*.<sup>10</sup> Eugene Rice’s account of Erasmus’ *Life* in his *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* has probably been the single most important work for later scholars writing about the *Life* and about the supposed ‘bond’ between Erasmus and Jerome.<sup>11</sup> Rice has skilfully and gracefully shown how the cult of Jerome unfolded and changed from its earliest wellsprings through its Mediaeval and Renaissance heydays in which the saint enjoyed great popularity in writing and in painting. Rice tells us, much like Ferguson before him, that while ‘the ground was thus not wholly unprepared for Erasmus’s work of restoration...he was the first to construct a biography largely free of chronological confusion and legendary elaboration’.<sup>12</sup> Later, in this same chapter, Rice puts forward more forcefully this idea in an especially revealing passage:

Erasmus...by disregarding the Mediaeval lives, excluding the testimony of writings traditionally and falsely ascribed to Jerome and rejecting the evidence of the narratives associated with the spread of Jerome’s cult in the fourteenth century, gave the definition of a contemporary source an untraditional strictness. The life of Jerome with which he prefaced his edition is a saint’s life written to an unprecedented standard of accuracy and critical scepticism and a turning point in Renaissance hagiography. Since Jerome’s own *Life of Paul the First Hermit*, the purpose of the typical saint’s life had been to glorify the saint and edify the reader. Like the Classical panegyric, it was marked by a high degree of stylization and a pervasive indifference to documented fact, a biographical genre closer to fiction than to history. Erasmus’ *Vita Hieronymi* is a work of history, not of fiction, for it was his intention and achievement to praise, edify, teach and reform by telling the truth.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ueli Dill sums up many of these works in his *Prolegomena zu einer Edition von Erasmus von Rotterdam, Scholia in Epistolas Hieronymi*, volume 1 (Doctoral thesis, University of Basel, 2004), 38. Hereafter I shall cite the first part of Dill’s thesis as ‘Dill I’ with the page number to follow (e.g. Dill I, 38).

<sup>11</sup> Eugene Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 124.

<sup>13</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 130.

For Rice, Erasmus' earnest search for the truth about Jerome's life and times, his scepticism about traditional Jerome stories, his supposedly 'critical' readings of contemporary sources and his deft use of Jerome's writings in order to further his larger goal of 'reforming' the Church all make Erasmus' *Life* 'accurate', 'critical' and truly history. Rice contrasts such history with the 'fiction' that he sees in prior stylized and moralizing hagiographies such as Jerome's *Life of Paul*, marked by 'a pervasive indifference to documented fact'. When all is said and done, Rice develops many of Ferguson's outstanding points, but his analysis of the *Life* does not differ in substance from what Ferguson left us back in 1933.

John C. Olin repeats much of Ferguson's analysis in his many articles treating the *Life*, time and again hammering home his point that with his *Life*, Erasmus broke 'with the earlier hagiography of the saint...[reconstructing] his sketch on the basis of historical evidence. His achievement was to draw so authentic an historical portrait within the context of his own reform programme...[and to] restore the authentic Jerome'.<sup>14</sup> Before reaching this conclusion much like Rice's and Ferguson's, Olin had already praised highly Erasmus' *Life* for its scholarship, for its 'authenticity' and, above all, for its trustworthiness, or *fides*:

The historical authenticity of the *Life* – its *fides* – is the first quality that strikes the reader. In its opening pages Erasmus sets down the critical standards that will guide him in his narrative. He disavows the use of the 'noble' or Platonic lie, the practice of telling fictitious tales for a good purpose, and affirms that he will give an honest account of Jerome's life...It is not without its shortcomings and obscurities, but it is nevertheless an excellent biographical sketch, a work of serious scholarship and ample documentation, generally faithful to the principles Erasmus set down.<sup>15</sup>

Olin renews these remarks in his article, '*Eloquentia, Eruditio, Fides*: Erasmus' *Life* of Jerome', in which he once again holds up the search for truth and accuracy as the unfailing

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<sup>14</sup> John C. Olin, 'Erasmus and Saint Jerome: The Close Bond and its Significance', in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 7 (1987): 45-46.

<sup>15</sup> Olin, 'The Close Bond', pages 43-44.

hallmark of true and ‘modern’ history.<sup>16</sup> Olin explains that even when Erasmus is not ‘objective’, or even accurate, in his *Life*, his biographical sketch is no less ‘faithful’ for this:

Erasmus was not striving for a complete or totally objective picture of the saint. He was giving us Jerome as an exemplar, selecting his details accordingly, and arguing the cause of a humanist theology. Along these lines the validity of his portrait – its *fides* – is certainly sound. And indeed its historicity extends still further. Erasmus did break with the earlier hagiography of the saint and attempt to reconstruct his life accurately on the basis of the historical evidence. In this endeavour and achievement lies the most striking characteristic of the *Life*. And that so authentic a portrait emerged in the context of Erasmus’ reform purpose is a measure both of his historical perception and his rhetorical skill.<sup>17</sup>

Praising Erasmus for his scholarly objectivity and for his just and ‘faithful’ interpretation of sources on the one hand, on the other Olin and other scholars before and after him have claimed that in its lack of objectivity the *Life*’s ‘historicity extends still further’.

James F. Brady worked together with Olin in order to edit the volume of the Toronto Edition of Erasmus’ *Collected Works* devoted to the 1516 Jerome *Edition* (the ‘CWE 61’). In their introductory remarks Olin and Brady repeat that the *Life* ‘is the first critical biography of Jerome’ and uphold Ferguson’s claim that the *Life* was ‘one of the finest examples of Erasmus’ scholarly work’, one whose ‘historical authenticity and validity...are sound’.<sup>18</sup> For them the *Life* was, moreover:

...a prime example of the development of modern historical method within the context of Renaissance humanism. Erasmus’ critical faculty was indeed an essential element of his scholarship and style. In addition, he possessed an ‘historical mindedness’, that is, a perspective on the past and an acute sense of the historicity of things. What is more, he was profoundly conscious of the relevance of the past to the present...Erasmus’ reform efforts were grounded in this recognition, and both his *Life of Jerome* and the entire edition bear witness to it.<sup>19</sup>

As we saw in Rice’s view of Erasmus’ *Life* and in that of Ferguson before him, for Olin and for Brady it was Erasmus’ search for historical truth and his use of it as a weapon in the broader battle to bring change to Christian life and praxis which made his work truly

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<sup>16</sup> John C. Olin, ‘*Eloquentia, Eruditio, Fides*: Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome*’, in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Sanctandream* (1986): 269.

<sup>17</sup> Olin, ‘*Eloquentia, Eruditio, Fides*’, 273-274.

<sup>18</sup> CWE 61, xxiii.

<sup>19</sup> CWE 61, xxi.

‘historical’, ‘critical’ and ‘modern’. Rice, Olin and Brady develop Ferguson’s basic thesis by putting forward the idea that the *Life* was important to Erasmus’ greater effort to change Christian life and belief according to his vision of the Church, but their analyses’ outstanding points are more or less the same as those which we see in Ferguson’s *Erasmi opuscula*.

Other scholars have mostly agreed with these appraisals while adding their own flair. James MacGuire has praised Erasmus’ *Life* in his article, ‘Erasmus’ Biographical Masterpiece: *Hieronymi Stridonensis Vita*’, for ‘its adherence to historical fact’, for its ‘realistic insight into the means of both discovering and of presenting character’, for its ‘sophisticated use of letters and other sources’ and for ‘its artistic use of the rhetorical biographical form’.<sup>20</sup> MacGuire also compares the methods that Erasmus used in his *Life* with his work on the New Testament, concluding that ‘Erasmus’ biographical principles...conform to the method of historical philological criticism according to which he wrote his Scriptural commentaries’.<sup>21</sup> André Godin upholds this connection between Erasmus’ scholarship for his *Life* and for his work for the 1516 Froben *New Testament* in his article, ‘Érasme Biographe Patristique: *Hieronymi Stridonensis Vita*’.<sup>22</sup> In his article, ‘Erasmus and Textual Scholarship’, D. F. S. Thomson offers us similar thoughts about Erasmus’ *Life*, hinting at methodological parallels between it and Erasmus’ Classical scholarship:

We are indebted to his Jerome for at least two major improvements, for both of which we have found parallels in his Classical texts; the exquisite sense of a writer’s personal Latin style that enabled Erasmus authoritatively to reject *spuria*, and the historical sense that allowed him to add a *Life of Jerome* which placed the Saint for the first time in his context of thought, letters and general culture.<sup>23</sup>

Even in his far from glowing appraisal of Erasmus’ scholarship and editorial work on Jerome, Thomson still has high praise for the *Life*’s historical accuracy and insight. All of these

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<sup>20</sup> James MacGuire, ‘Erasmus’ Biographical Masterpiece: *Hieronymus Stridonensis Vita*’, in *Renaissance Quarterly* 26 (1973): 266.

<sup>21</sup> MacGuire, ‘Erasmus’ Biographical Masterpiece’, 267.

<sup>22</sup> André Godin, ‘Érasme Biographe Patristique’, in *Studia Patristica* 18 (1989-1990): 355.

<sup>23</sup> D. F. S. Thomson, ‘Erasmus and Textual Scholarship’, in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: the Man and the Scholar*, eds. Jan Sperna Weiland and Willem Frijhoff (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1988), 165-166.



scholars likewise claim that we can see the ‘critical’ historical methods which Erasmus used in order to write his *Life* elsewhere in his works.

Hilmar Pabel has both qualified and deepened this scholarly consensus in his *Herculean Labours*, in which he describes the importance of many editions of Jerome’s letters prior to Erasmus’ and also points out what he calls the *Life*’s ‘paratextual functions’ within the 1516 *Edition*. Pabel does agree that the *Life* is remarkably ‘critical’ and ‘modern’ history, calling it a ‘culmination’ of fifteenth-century humanist hagiography and scholarship on Jerome.<sup>24</sup> He does, however, emphasize that Erasmus’ *Life* belonged to a larger humanist tradition more than a century old by 1516:

Erasmus’ programme of *Hieronymus ex Hieronymo* was not unique or unprecedented. It belonged to a long-standing biographical tradition that revealed Jerome through his writings and that, like Erasmus, celebrated Jerome as a great Christian scholar. Erasmus in effect revived the tradition after the hiatus caused by three mediaeval forgeries that sought Jerome’s glory not in his writings but in contrived miracle stories. By redirecting the attention of his readers to the writings as miraculous he not only indulged in a humanist idealization of Jerome but prepared readers for approaching Jerome’s literary remains in accordance with this idealization.<sup>25</sup>

Pabel is right to stress that before Erasmus there was indeed a long tradition of writing about Jerome, one which Erasmus knew and into which his own biography fit. This is something revealed not only in incunable lives of Jerome and writings about him but no less in Renaissance and Mediaeval manuscripts. In the world of Anglo-Saxon scholarship, Pabel is among the first scholars to have looked at Erasmus’ *Life* in the context of the greater 1516 *Edition* and of an important prior tradition of interpreting and of printing Jerome’s letters. His analysis of prior printed editions of Jerome’s letters is, however, limited. One of this thesis’ main goals will be to continue down the path that Pabel pointed out in *Herculean Labours* and to see what such research can tell us about Renaissance and Mediaeval traditions of transmitting, of reading and of understanding Jerome.

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<sup>24</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 180.

<sup>25</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 180-181.

Before going any further, I would like to bring up a note of caution that Hans Honnacker rightly sounds in his introduction to a recently published bibliography of scholarly work about Erasmus.<sup>26</sup> He remarks that if there is still a want of interpretation of Erasmus' Patristic scholarship, still more outstanding is the want of serious work on Erasmus' poetic output, an 'immense production' of Latin and later of Greek poetry which Erasmus saw into print from his youngest days until his death.<sup>27</sup> Along the same lines, writing back in 1989 about Erasmus' *Adages*, Luigi Michelini Tocci rightly observes how strange it is that we had then, as we have still today, a hard time finding detailed work on Erasmus' *Adages*, the work that 'the author and his most gifted contemporaries considered one of his most important', and on which he probably worked the most and the longest.<sup>28</sup> Newer secondary literature on Erasmus has emphasized the importance of Erasmus' Patristic scholarship, to which he devoted considerable time and energy during the last twenty years of his life. It must be remembered, however, that from the first Parisian edition of the *Adages* published in 1500, containing 818 adages, to the edition published with the Froben in 1536 a few months before Erasmus' death, containing 4251 adages and a sizeable scholarly apparatus, Erasmus' work on the *Adages* was perhaps his greatest scholarly and literary undertaking. Tocci believes that the *Adages* are not only 'the work most characteristic of Erasmus' genius, but also the work that holds in it the truest expression of his mission, of his culture and of his vocation'.<sup>29</sup> Erasmus' labours for the *Adages* were at least as 'Herculean' as the labours that he undertook for the *Edition*, and long before 1516 Erasmus himself had described as a Herculean undertaking his editing and his compiling for the 1508 Aldine edition of his *Adages*.<sup>30</sup> Tocci's

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<sup>26</sup> See Hans Honnacker, ed. *Erasmus Roterodamus* (Florence: SISMEL, 2011). For an older bibliography see Ferdinand Van der Haeghen, ed. *Biblioteca Erasiana* (Leiden: Nieuwkoop de Graaft, 1972).

<sup>27</sup> Hans Honnacker, *Erasmus Roterodamus*, xii

<sup>28</sup> Luigi Michelini Tocci, *In Officina Erasmi* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1989), 24-32.

<sup>29</sup> Tocci, *In Officina Erasmi*, 26.

<sup>30</sup> Jean-Claude Margolin, 'Les Fêtes vénitiennes d'Érasme la cuillete des fruits mûrs, la préparation des moissons nouvelles', in *Erasmus, Venezia e la cultura padana nel '500: atti del XIX convegno internazionale di studi storici* (Rovigo: Minelliana, 1995), 18-19.

analysis was shared by the great Dutch scholar of Erasmus, Johan Huizinga<sup>31</sup> and it has been supported by the works of more recent historians.<sup>32</sup> We must be careful about taking even the whole of Erasmus' Patristic scholarship in isolation from his literary and scholarly output writ large. When looking at individual works such as the 1516 *Edition* and one of its many paratexts, Erasmus' *Life of Jerome*, we should be even more wary of the danger of losing perspective.

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There is now a solid body of literature about Erasmus' *Life of Jerome*. In this literature we find more consensus than disagreement, and almost all works include praise of the *Life*'s 'critical', 'modern' historical methods and its historical *fides*. Recently, Lisa Jardine, Clausi and Pabel have for different reasons qualified the scholarly consensus about Erasmus' *Life* while still largely accepting its broader outlines. Without going into too much detail, I shall sum up below what this scholarly literature has marked out as the 'essentials' of Erasmus' portrayal of Jerome.

Firstly, in scholarly literature on the *Life* we see emphasis of its 'autobiographical' nature. Over half a century ago Denys Gorce put forward the idea that Erasmus portrayed Jerome as his *alter ego* in the *Life*, in which we see 'a likeness of nature (*connaturalité*) which jumps to the eyes'.<sup>33</sup> Years later Eugene Rice called the *Life* a 'self-portrait' in his *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*. In her 1988 edition and translation of Erasmus' *Life*, Anna Morisi Guerra claimed that the *Life* was 'rich with autobiographical references' and that Erasmus

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<sup>31</sup> Tocci, *In Officina Erasmi*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Benedetto Clausi and Vincenza Milazzo, 'Il commento, gli scolii, il testa. Spinte ideali e percorsi reali dell'*Opus Hieronymianum* di Erasmo', in *I Padri sotto il torchio*, ed. Mariarosa Cortesi (Florence: SISMEL, 1999), 109.

<sup>33</sup> Denys Gorce, 'La Patristique dans la réforme d'Erasme', in *Festgabe Joseph Lortz*, volume 1 (Baden-Baden: Bruno Grimm, 1958), 257.

showed in its pages ‘more than one autobiographical trace’.<sup>34</sup> Not the last historian to treat the ‘autobiographical’ nature of the *Life*, Lisa Jardine colourfully describes ‘the Escher-like flicker-effect which Rice and Olin comment upon (as did Ferguson before them...) – from biography to autobiography, and from portrait to self-portrait’. For Jardine, this flicker-effect was no fruit of hazard, for she believes that the *Life* was Erasmus’ foremost essay at ‘self-formation as an icon of scholar-piety’.<sup>35</sup> Faced with ‘near agreement’ among scholars, Hilmar Pabel sounded a note of caution in his *Herculean Labours*:

Despite the near agreement about the autobiographical element in Erasmus’ *Vita Hieronymi*, one should not push this too far. The relationship between Erasmus and Jerome might resemble a *communicatio idiomatum*. Erasmus may have refashioned Jerome in his own image and likeness because he allowed Jerome to refashion him.<sup>36</sup>

This note of caution notwithstanding, Pabel does not truly disagree with the idea that there is an important ‘autobiographical element’ to the *Life*. Indeed, for Pabel, it is clear that ‘Erasmus appropriated the *persona* of Jerome to accomplish [his goal]...to take his place as the pre-eminent Christian scholar in the humanist republic of letters’.<sup>37</sup> Such thinking is in line with Pabel’s article in the *Renaissance Quarterly*, ‘Reading Jerome in the Renaissance’, in which he repeated Gorce’s words – as did Benedetto Clausi in *Ridar voce*<sup>38</sup> – that ‘Jerome emerges in the *Vita* as Erasmus’ *alter ego*’.<sup>39</sup>

In his article, ‘Erasmus’ Jerome: The Publishing of a Christian Author’, Mark Vessey, whose arguments Pabel mostly endorses, seems at first glance to deny the ‘autobiographical’ nature of the *Life* as Jardine describes it, instead putting forward his idea that Erasmus merely

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<sup>34</sup> Mosiri Guerra, *Vita di San Girolamo*, 5; 18.

<sup>35</sup> Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: the Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 74.

<sup>36</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 179.

<sup>37</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 179.

<sup>38</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 81-82.

<sup>39</sup> Hilmar Pabel, ‘Reading Jerome in the Renaissance: Reception of the *Adversus Jovinianum*’, in *Renaissance Quarterly* 55 (2002): 472.

let Jerome ‘the artist’ of autobiography speak for himself.<sup>40</sup> And yet, for all his seeming disagreement with Jardine, Vessey does not cast aside the idea of a *connaturalité* or of an *alter ego* between Erasmus and Jerome.<sup>41</sup> Vessey’s main point is that Erasmus must have learnt at least some tricks of the autobiographical trade from Jerome himself, but this does not rule out the ‘autobiographical’ brushstrokes which other historians have found in Erasmus’ ‘great fresco’, the *Life of Jerome*.<sup>42</sup> As recently as 2010, in yet another article about the *Life* Jean-Claude Margolin has reminded us: ‘it is not exaggerated to say that this portrait tends to be a self-portrait of Erasmus.’<sup>43</sup>

Second, most historians of the *Life* would agree that Jerome held a special, if not the foremost, place in Erasmus’ view of the Church, of learning and of the whole world. Margolin pointed this out long ago when he wrote that ‘as a scholar, letter-writer and translator of the Bible, Jerome is the saint that best agreed with the temperament of the Dutch humanist’.<sup>44</sup> In this remark Margolin is repeating the ideas of Ferguson, who has called the *Life* a ‘labour of love, an act of filial piety by one who considered himself Jerome’s spiritual descendant’.<sup>45</sup> Denys Gorce has taken this idea further still:

Erasmus’ favourite is without question...Jerome. In his view of patristics, this man stands out in a special way. Jerome is really Erasmus’ ‘man’, an incomparable man, ‘Saint Jerome’, as he liked to call him...To Jerome went the palm of victory, to him all honour and all glory. If, among the Church Fathers, Erasmus’ heart wavers from time to time; if, at one moment, it is Saint Augustine who, maybe without being his first love, smiles the most at him, at the end of the day it is Jerome who wins over Erasmus, Augustine remaining the man for Luther.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Mark Vessey, ‘Erasmus’ Jerome: The Publishing of a Christian Author’, in the *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 14 (1994): 90-94.

<sup>41</sup> Mark Vessey, ‘Erasmus’ Jerome’, 90-94.

<sup>42</sup> Denys Gorce, ‘La Patristique’, 270.

<sup>43</sup> Jean-Claude Margolin, ‘Érasme, éditeur de Jérôme’, in *Gli antichi e i moderni: studi in onore di Roberto Cardini* (Firenze: Polistampa, 2010), 768.

<sup>44</sup> Margolin, ‘Érasme, éditeur de Jérôme’, 768.

<sup>45</sup> *Erasmii opuscula*, 125.

<sup>46</sup> Gorce, ‘La Patristique’, 255.

Likewise, Chomarat is ‘certain’ of the special relationship between Erasmus and Jerome,<sup>47</sup> and we see similar ideas in Anna Morisi Guerra’s edition, in which she writes that ‘Jerome was the man who among all others most represented Erasmus’ intellectual and spiritual ideas’.<sup>48</sup> In his article meant to ‘appraise the bond’ between Erasmus and Jerome, Olin already seems to take for granted a consensus on the matter when he writes: ‘we are well aware that Saint Jerome occupied a special place in the thought and work of Erasmus.’<sup>49</sup>

Olin and Brady have taken this idea even further in their work for the *Life* included in the *Collected Works of Erasmus* (CWE 61). For these scholars, Jerome’s foremost place in Erasmus’ thought and beliefs has become an unqualified fact:

...from the start...Jerome occupied a special place in Erasmus’ studies and scholarly plans. By 1500, soon after his return to the continent from a memorable trip to England where he had met John Colet at Oxford and the young Thomas More, Erasmus went to work on a project to restore and edit the letters of Jerome and write a commentary on them. It is his first major enterprise.<sup>50</sup>

Olin and Brady are mistaken to state that the 1516 Jerome *Edition* was Erasmus’ ‘first major enterprise’. Moreover, it is unlikely that Erasmus had done any serious work for the *Edition* before the 1510s. In the meantime he penned the popular 1503 *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (*Handbook of the Christian Knight*) and the blockbuster, greatly enlarged 1508 Aldine edition of the *Adages*, both ‘major enterprises’. This is to say nothing of *The Praise of Folly* first published in 1509, perhaps Erasmus’ only work that is still well known and widely read today. Be this as it may, the idea that Olin and Brady share about Jerome’s ‘special place’ in Erasmus’ studies is one with which few historians would disagree strongly, least of all Lisa Jardine, for whom Jerome is *the* model for Erasmus’ self-creation as a humanist scholar. In the existing secondary literature on this matter discussion of the relative merits of Jerome and

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<sup>47</sup> Jacques Chomarat, *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Érasme* (Paris: Belles lettres, 182).

<sup>48</sup> Anna Morisi Guerra, ‘La leggenda di San Girolamo. Temi e problemi tra umanesimo e controriforma’, in *Clio* 23 (1987):24.

<sup>49</sup> Olin, ‘Close Bond’, 182.

<sup>50</sup> CWE 61, xv.

Augustine is closely tied to the idea of Jerome's 'special place' in Erasmus' heart, mind and soul. In this discussion few seem to disagree with Pabel's statement that for Erasmus, 'Augustine pales in comparison with Jerome'.<sup>51</sup>

Third, time and again we come across the idea that Jerome was a necessary and a prominent ingredient in Erasmus' special programme to renew Christian letters and life according to the standards of a purer, earlier Christianity which we see in Jerome and in the writings of other Church Fathers. As Ferguson puts it:

It was Erasmus' aim to restore the simple, undogmatic, spiritual Christianity that he found in the earliest sources, and by doing so to free his contemporaries from the hampering intellectual bonds bequeathed by centuries of dogmatic argument and sterile definitions. In carrying out this aim, the critical study of Jerome, the translator and interpreter of the Scriptures, was second only in importance to the restoration of the Biblical texts themselves.<sup>52</sup>

Joseph Coppens seconds this idea in his article, 'Erasmus' Portrait of Saint Jerome':

...despite Erasmus' declarations, the *Life of Saint Jerome* is above all a humanist plea for the ideas and for the reforms that were especially dear to him. This is the *Life*'s most important point, one all the more important since the *Life* dates from a period when Erasmus had reached his full maturity but before he had suffered too many attacks or the Lutheran revolt came to complicate and to stir up the situation in the Church as well as his own reforming projects.<sup>53</sup>

We find variations on this theme in Olin's many treatments of the *Life*, such as in his article appraising the 'close bond',<sup>54</sup> as well as in his '*Eloquentia, Eruditio, Fides: Erasmus' Life of Jerome*', in which he puts forward this idea anew and with even stronger words when he treats the 'biographical' parts of the *Life*:

The import of this portion of the *Life* is obvious. Erasmus is asserting that this kind of training is essential for the theologian and is giving us Jerome as the model to imitate. He is also asserting that theology is the study of Holy Scripture and requires every talent, every skill, and he is defending this thesis against his scholastic opponents who had a very different concept of that sacred discipline. We are here at the heart of Erasmus' reform Humanism: his aim to revitalize theological study, to restore

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<sup>51</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 208.

<sup>52</sup> *Erasmii opuscula*, 126-127.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph Coppens, 'Le portrait de Saint Jérôme d'après Erasme', in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensis*, volume 2 (Paris: Vrin, 1972), 822.

<sup>54</sup> Olin, 'Close Bond', 45.

the true theology – the *vera theologia* – of the early Church. In this endeavour Jerome led the way and represented the goal.<sup>55</sup>

In another related article, ‘Erasmus and Saint Jerome: An Appraisal of the Bond’, Olin repeats and develops further the same idea.<sup>56</sup> In their introductory work on the Toronto *Collected Works of Erasmus* (CWE 61), Brady and Olin write again that the ‘*Life of Jerome* fully reveals Erasmus’ understanding of the Father and the central role he played in Erasmus’ programme for theological renewal and reform’.<sup>57</sup>

Newer scholarship on the *Life* has confirmed these ideas. For Clausi, Erasmus’ ‘reading of facts and of people stemmed from his wish to justify and to strengthen a certain conception of theology by way of the model constructed together with the *Life* and with the saint’s writings’.<sup>58</sup> Clausi believes that ‘Jerome is the incarnation of the *vera ac vetus theologia*, and the events of his life our steps in an ideal theological formation, a path that in the end identifies itself with the path of holiness, of which these writings are just examples’.<sup>59</sup> Pabel agrees with this appraisal of the bond in his *Herculean Labours*, in which he asserts that Erasmus’ *Life* ‘certainly gives Jerome an exemplary function’.<sup>60</sup> To my knowledge, the only scholar standing outside this consensus is Lisa Jardine, who seems not to take seriously Erasmus’ wish to seek out and to spread a Catholicism more in line with the purer Christian belief and practice of Jerome’s day. Even for Jardine, however, Jerome’s importance to Erasmus is largely owing to the Dutch humanist’s programmes for ‘reform’. Jardine claims that in Erasmus’ *Life* we see his reforming projects and ideas which fostered ‘the transition from “sacred” to “learned” as the grounds for personal spiritual salvation’. Therefore, she in truth confirms Jerome’s ‘special place’ in Erasmus’ engagements to change the contemporary

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<sup>55</sup> Olin, ‘*Eloquentia, Eruditio, Fides*’, 272.

<sup>56</sup> Olin, ‘Erasmus and Saint Jerome: An Appraisal of the Bond’, in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: the Man and the Scholar*, 183.

<sup>57</sup> CWE 61, xxiv; xxxiii.

<sup>58</sup> Clausi, *Ridare voce*, 127.

<sup>59</sup> Clausi, *Ridare voce*, 129.

<sup>60</sup> Pabel cites from Olin’s works in order to show his agreement. See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 247.



Church, claiming that Erasmus had goals which were not necessarily religious and which gave rise to ways of thinking beyond the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy.<sup>61</sup>

Fourth, in scholarly literature on the *Life* we see an emphasis on Jerome's importance to Erasmus' project 'to reform' Christian letters by promoting a healthy blend of worldly and of godly learning. Drawing especially from Erasmus' earliest letters, which breathe equal zeal for Classical authors and for the Church Fathers, many scholars share Ferguson's belief that in Erasmus' early days at Steyn Abbey he 'first worked out his conscious reconciliation of Christianity with pagan culture' and began to undertake 'his life-long defence of good learning' against the 'barbarians'.<sup>62</sup> For Ferguson, Erasmus found in Jerome the 'perfect combination of *bonae litterae* and *philosophia Christi* which were thenceforth to be the two fundamental concepts of the Erasmian reform programme'.<sup>63</sup> Brady and Olin take up Ferguson's idea in their introduction to the *Collected Works of Erasmus* (CWE 61):

The restoration of Jerome...was synonymous with the restoration of theology itself...Already in the letter he wrote as a young canon at Steyn saying he had read and copied all of Jerome's letters it is clear that Erasmus admired their literary elegance. They were decisive proof that there need not be a divorce between religion and culture. Jerome in fact embodied their union and could serve therefore an exemplar for a young Erasmus already captivated by that revival of Classical letters which is the essence of Renaissance humanism...[Erasmus] sought above all, as Chomarat has pointed out, to unite eloquence and piety, to forge what has been called, in the best sense, a 'rhetorical theology'. Here again Jerome was the model and the ideal.<sup>64</sup>

In a later article Olin repeats his belief in 'the affinity between' Erasmus and Jerome that was 'a classic example of that revival of Antiquity – that return to the sources – [which] we associate so basically with the Renaissance'.<sup>65</sup> Pabel does not disagree with these authors. 'We can thus surmise', he writes, 'that in his early reading Erasmus drew inspiration from Jerome for the humanist project of promoting the study of Antiquity and of reconciling it with

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<sup>61</sup> Jardine, *Man of Letters*, 59.

<sup>62</sup> *Erasmi opuscula*, 126.

<sup>63</sup> *Erasmi opuscula*, 126.

<sup>64</sup> CWE 61, xxxiv.

<sup>65</sup> Olin, 'Appraisal of the Bond', 186.

Christianity’.<sup>66</sup> For Pabel, ‘Erasmus’ Jerome represents the humanist enterprise that impelled Erasmus. [Jerome] combines piety and learning; he presses pagan erudition, judiciously appropriated, into the service of a rhetorically refined theology; his intellectual and spiritual foundation is the Bible’.<sup>67</sup> Lisa Jardine’s analysis also fits in with this general consensus. Although she strips Christian spirituality and belief almost wholly from Erasmus and from his editorial work on Jerome, Jardine puts the combination of godly and of worldly learning squarely at the core of Erasmus’ efforts to mould his international image, remarking that ‘somewhere in the re-casting of the *Vita Hieronymi*, the lives of Jerome and of Erasmus became subtly intertwined’.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, whether in Jardine’s stripped-down, ‘secular’ Erasmus or in the Christian humanist ‘reformer’ portrayed in the analyses of Ferguson, Olin and Pabel, in most related secondary literature we see the same emphasis on the ‘fusion or...confusion of secular and sacred attention’ in Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome*.

We have seen above four points of widespread agreement among most scholars of the *Life*; to wit, that the *Life* was one of the first examples of ‘critical history’; that it was ‘autobiographical’ as well as ‘biographical’; that it shows the ‘special bond’ between Erasmus and Jerome as well as his special place in Erasmus’ ‘reform project’ intended to bring the Church in line with an older and purer theology; and that in its pages Erasmus advocated the healthy combination of godly and of worldly learning in order to foster a ‘rebirth’ of Christian letters. But here we would do well to keep in mind Benedetto Clausi’s words that ‘...the whole *Life of Jerome* was most likely written in [Basel]’ and that ‘it would have been hard for Erasmus to be Jerome’s biographer had he not already been his editor and his commentator’.<sup>69</sup> Erasmus’ project to edit Jerome came long before his biography of the saint, which was written as an introduction to a much greater work, his commentaries on Jerome’s letters.

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<sup>66</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 27.

<sup>67</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 218.

<sup>68</sup> Jardine, *Man of Letters*, 74.

<sup>69</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 95.

Pabel is therefore correct to stress that ‘it is important to remember that the *Vita* was not primarily intended as a separate document, a text independent of Erasmus’ edition of Jerome...Erasmus composed it expressly for the edition. As such, the *Vita* fulfills a prefatory or paratextual function’.<sup>70</sup> To take Erasmus’ *Life* without keeping in mind the larger Jerome *Edition* is to risk misunderstanding what Erasmus was doing with the *Life* as well as the reasons for which he did it. However we choose to interpret Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome*, we must keep in mind that unlike many fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century lives of saints written by humanists and thoroughly catalogued by Alison Frazier in her *Possible Lives*, the *Life* was not meant to be a stand-alone work but was rather part, and a much lesser part at that, of a far weightier scholarly undertaking and production.<sup>71</sup> The first part of this thesis will look more closely at the *Life of Jerome* by drawing from the 1516 Froben Jerome *Edition*, from Erasmus’ commentaries on Jerome’s letters and from these same letters. Drawing from such ‘purest fountains’, we shall deepen our understanding of Erasmus’ affection for, editorial work on and biography of Jerome as well as the place of the Erasmus’ *Life* and the 1516 Jerome *Edition* in the wider understanding and cult of Jerome in the Renaissance.

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<sup>70</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 247.

<sup>71</sup> Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

# PART I: CHAPTER I

## NOBLE LIES

In Erasmus' lifetime, even those knowing next to nothing about Saint Jerome (347-420 AD) would have been likely to know that he had been flogged at a heavenly tribunal for being a 'Ciceronian, not a Christian'.<sup>72</sup> Jerome's 'Cicero dream', or *Somnium Ciceronianum*, ranks among the most renowned Christian dreams of post-Apostolic times. The *Somnium* is found in Jerome's letter to the virgin Eustochium beginning *Audi filia*,<sup>73</sup> one of his most famous letters in his own day as it remains today. At one time the *Somnium*'s appeal owed much to its relevance to learned Christians from Antiquity until the Society of Jesus' very successful efforts to enable Catholics to read Cicero with a clear conscience.<sup>74</sup> Decades before Ignatius of Loyola's foot-soldiers began their work in earnest, Erasmus complained in his commentaries on *Audi filia*:

This is that account which everyone remembers, even those who have never read a single word of the writings of Jerome. He was flogged, they say, because he had read Cicero. And out of a marvellous devotion, as it were, they shun all good literature. They have nothing to do with it lest by chance unwittingly they might come upon some word of Cicero and be flogged with Jerome. At the same time they consider themselves very close to the Apostles if their language is as coarse as possible.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Jerome 22, 30: Interrogatus conditionem, Christianum me esse respondi. Et ille qui residebat: 'mentiris', ait, 'Ciceronianus es, non Christianus; ubi thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum.'

<sup>73</sup> *Audi filia* means 'Hearken, O Daughter', and is taken from Psalm 40, 11.

<sup>74</sup> For more on this story, see John Monfasani, 'Renaissance Ciceronianism and Christianity', in *Humanisme et Église en Italie et en France méridionale (XVe siècle-milieu du XVIe siècle)*, ed. Patrick Gilli (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2004), 361-379. Also, see Hilmar Pabel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 15, 112. See David S. Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist: a Study in Christian Latin Thought and Letters* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964), 119.

<sup>75</sup> See Appendix XXVII for *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Cum ante annos plurimos* (1516 Edition I, f. 61v): Haec est illa fabula, quam memoriter tenent omnes etiam ii qui ne verbum quidem unquam legerunt in scriptis Hieronymianis. Vapulavit, inquiunt, Hieronymus, quod Ciceronem legerit. Ac mira quadam religione sic ab omnibus bonis abstinere litteris, ut nec attingant, ne forte imprudentes incidant in aliquod verbum Ciceronis, et cum Hieronymo vapulent...

Erasmus' complaints were probably exaggerated, but it is clear that many contemporaries took the *Somnium* as a serious warning about the dangers of pagan Classical literature. As late as 1605, the young artist Domenichino (1581-1641) finished his commission to paint a series of frescoes about the life of Jerome in the cloister of Sant'Onofrio on the Gianicolo, home to Hieronymite monks established at Rome since about 1439. In one of his frescoes, above the painted text from *Audi filia* recounting the *Somnium Ciceronianum*, we see Jerome being flogged by angels and a book cast down by his side, with the word 'Cicero' written across its fore edge.

Attitudes about Cicero and other pagan Classical authors changed over the sixteenth-century, once again thanks in large part to the Jesuits, but the *Somnium* remained and remains today a striking story owing to its rhetorical force and to its powerful images. Megan Williams claims that the dream was most probably 'a fiction' or 'a literary elaboration of an incident' spurred by Jerome's 'sense of the incompatibility of Latin literary culture and Christian ascetic piety that he had not felt a decade or more earlier'.<sup>76</sup> Maurice Testard believes that the dream was Jerome's attempt to convince Eustochium to embrace religious life and a 'step in Jerome's spiritual journey', but forgoes saying more than this.<sup>77</sup> Few today seem to accept the historical reality of the *Somnium*, but we should keep in mind Robin Sowerby's remark that, 'if a modern reader is tempted to see irony in this letter, it is clear that no one in the Renaissance read it ironically'.<sup>78</sup> In Erasmus' day scholars had to choose how best to understand the *Somnium* and what relevance, if any, it should have to their own

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<sup>76</sup> Megan Williams, *The Monk and the Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 27.

<sup>77</sup> Maurice Testard, *Saint Jérôme: l'apôtre savant et pauvre du patriciat romain* (Paris: Belles lettres, 1969), 26. These two appraisals are more open-ended than A. S. Pease's steadfast rejection of the dream's authenticity in the early twentieth century. See his 'Jerome and Pagan Literature', in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 50 (1919): 155-167.

<sup>78</sup> Robin Sowerby, 'Humanitas Renata', in *Renaissance? Perceptions of Continuity and Discontinuity in Europe, c.1300-c.1500*, eds. Alexander Lee, Pit Péporté and Harry Schnitker (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 68.

studies.<sup>79</sup> That the *Somnium* was no joking matter for Erasmus is clear, and it seems that he, like many humanists before and after him, was in some wise ‘haunted’ by Jerome’s powerful condemnation of Classical learning in the *Somnium* and in the passages which introduce it in *Audi filia*.<sup>80</sup> By looking at how Erasmus treated this tricky matter in his *Life*, we can see that his biography of the saint may not be as ‘critical’ as some scholars believe. Instead, for its author, the search for the historical truth of Jerome’s life could sometimes prove less important than the message and the ideas that he wanted his readers to take away from his biography. Erasmus’ interpretation of Jerome’s famous *Somnium Ciceronianum* will serve as an introduction to my analysis of Erasmus’ work as an historian in his *Life* as well as in his commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*.

Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome* is a sizeable and skilfully wrought biography of the saint. Found at the beginning of the first volume of the nine-volume edition of Jerome’s *Opera omnia* (*Collected Works*) that Johannes Froben published from his press at Basel in 1516,<sup>81</sup> this *Life* was one of Erasmus’ rare forays into the genres of biography and history.<sup>82</sup> Jerome, on the other hand, wrote many important works of biography, hagiography and history. Most famous of these is his *De viris illustribus* (*Catalogue of Famous Men*), a collection that listed many early Christians’ foremost writings and deeds and also noted the achievements of the pagan Seneca as well as of a few noteworthy Jewish scholars such as Philo, Josephus and Justus. In addition to this monumental work of history, Jerome translated Eusebius’ *Chronicle* from Greek into Latin and wrote lives of three early Christian hermits. His *Life of*

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<sup>79</sup> Dill I, 26.

<sup>80</sup> John M. McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: The Humanist as Orator* (Tempe, Arizona: Mediaeval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996), 131.

<sup>81</sup> As a reminder, from now on the 1516 Froben *Edition* of Saint Jerome’s *Collected Works*, or *Opera omnia*, will be cited in the text as the *Edition*, the 1516 *Edition* or the 1516 *Jerome Edition*.

<sup>82</sup> See Peter Bietenholz, *History and Biography in the Word of Erasmus of Rotterdam* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1966), 45. See André Godin, ‘Érasme Biographe Patristique: *Hieronymi Stridonensis Vita*’, in *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 50: 3 (1988): 352-353.

*Paul*, *Life of Malchus* and *Life of Hilarion* are, if not the first, then among the first Christian biographies written in the Latin language,<sup>83</sup> and Daniel Russo believes that they served as models for many Mediaeval lives of the saints.<sup>84</sup> Even Jerome's sympathetic biographer Maurice Testard has trouble taking Jerome's lives of the three hermits seriously. In these works, Testard remarks, the saints 'move in a marvellous universe where centaurs roam, where satyrs proclaim the name of Jesus Christ and where wild beasts are the friends of men', which tales Jerome 'treats with the smiling grace of Walt Disney'.<sup>85</sup> With rather less sympathy, David S. Wiesen summed up these lives with a high-handed quote from Gibbon: 'We include under the heading "Historical Works" the three biographies of the monks Paul, Hilarion and Malchus, in spite of Gibbon's remark that "the only defect of these pleasing compositions is the want of truth and common sense."'<sup>86</sup>

Adalbert de Vogüé has written thorough interpretations of these three lives, but we still await a thorough treatment of their place in the Mediaeval hagiographical tradition.<sup>87</sup> An interpreter of the keenest insight, nowhere does Vogüé suggest that Jerome did not take seriously what he was writing in these lives or that he did not want them to be believed by his readers – or at least by 'simpler' readers. These lives are brimming over with tales of saints'

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<sup>83</sup> For a good, recent critical edition of these three lives see Pierre Leclerc, Edgardo Martin Morale and Adalbert de Vogüé, eds. *Trois Vies de Moines* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007).

<sup>84</sup> See, for instance, Daniel Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie: étude d'iconographie et de spiritualité (XIIIe-XVe siècle)* (Paris: Découverte; Rome: École Française de Rome, 1987), 6-7.

<sup>85</sup> Testard, *Saint Jérôme*, 27.

<sup>86</sup> David S. Wiesen, *Saint Jerome as a Satirist: a Study in Christian Latin Thought and Letter* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964), 47-48. For the quote from Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* see footnote 17 to Chapter 37: 'The stories of Paul, Hilarion and Malchus, by the same author [Jerome], are admirably told; and the only defect of these pleasing compositions is the want of truth and common sense'. For two recent, brief write-ups about these lives see Lorenzo Perrone, 'L'esegeta romanziero: Gerolamo, le Vite di Ilarione, Paolo, Malco e gli inizi dell'agiografia monastica', in *Adamantius* 16 (2010): 125-129. See also Giorgia Grandi, 'Il problema del genere letterario delle Vite geronimiane: storia di una scelta ardita e vincente', in *Adamantius* 16 (2010): 130-140.

<sup>87</sup> For Vosgüé's interpretation of the Life of Paul, see *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité*, volume 1 (Paris: Éditions Cerf, 1991), 150-184. For more about the Life of Malchus see *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité*, volume 2 (Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1993), 77-101. For more about the Life of Hilarion see *Histoire littéraire*, volume 2, 163-236.

supernatural feats and of their almost equally miraculous austerities and fasting. Vogüé believes that Jerome wrote his lives of the hermits in a simpler Latin style in order to make them more accessible to the less learned readers, for whom he wished the three lives to serve as models of monastic life and piety.<sup>88</sup> From his close study of Jerome and of the saint's iconography from the early Middle Ages to the Renaissance, Russo believes that in the former period these three lives 'were read, imitated and spread everywhere, and laid the groundwork for all hagiographers in search of a model'.<sup>89</sup> From the number of surviving manuscripts it is at least clear that these lives were widely copied and read.<sup>90</sup>

For Erasmus, however, these three lives were quite simply not to be taken seriously. In his *argumenta*, or introductory commentaries, to the life of Paul and to the life of Malchus for the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus claimed that Jerome was 'playing' or 'toying' when he wrote them 'for the sake of exercising his wit'. He also claimed that these two works had been wilfully corrupted during the transmission process, thereby offering readers an excuse for their extravagances which would be hard to disprove.<sup>91</sup> As we turn to look at the first section of Erasmus' *Life*, we should keep in mind Jerome's three lives of Paul, of Malchus and of Hilarion. In doing so we can understand that Erasmus' condemnation of past Christian hagiography in his *Life* was, whether he meant it or not, a striking condemnation of Jerome's

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<sup>88</sup> Vogüé, *Histoire littéraire*, volume 1, 151.

<sup>89</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 6-7.

<sup>90</sup> See entries 261-263 in Bernard Lambert, OSB. *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana Manuscripta*, volume 2 (Steenbrugis: Abbatia S. Petri, 1969).

<sup>91</sup> *Argumentum* to *Vita Pauli Eremitae* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 107v: De ortu et vita obitu Pauli primi, sicuti putant Eremitae, et quomodo fuerit sepultus a divo Antonio monacho. Tanta erat in exemplaribus varietas, ut appareat Hieronymus saepius idem argumentum aliis tractasse verbis, aut alium exercendae copiae causa, hoc fecisse. Videtur et hoc Hieronymus exercitandi ingenii gratia luisse. See also the *Argumentum* to *Vita Malchi Monachi* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 116r: Depinxit solitarium, depinxit celebrem, depingit hic captivum et agitatum. Lusit et in hoc argumento, ingenii exercitandi gratia. Caeterum varietatem lectionis, apparet non casu, sed studio alicuius accidisce.



three hagiographies. This is something to think about more carefully before repeating the idea that Jerome was Erasmus' 'man' and 'master'.<sup>92</sup>

Erasmus opened his *Life* by acknowledging that some wise men of the past, among them Plato and Origen, allowed for and spread untruths meant to foster the moral betterment of the unlearned.<sup>93</sup> Such lies, according to Erasmus, found welcoming ears in most men who tend, 'by some innate quality forged into [their] souls, more readily to listen to made-up rather than to true deeds and to believe false stories over things that really happened'.<sup>94</sup> Notwithstanding man's fondness for falsehood, Erasmus thought it better to follow Augustine's counsel, for whom such 'noble lies' were dangerous owing to the clouds of suspicion and doubt that they could cast on truth in general and, worse still, on the Gospel Truth itself.<sup>95</sup> Probably drawing in part from ideas found in Augustine's letter to Jerome beginning *Nunquam aequae quisquam*, in which Augustine warned that 'noble lies' for the sake of God and the Church could easily do more harm to the Christian Faith than outright attacks, Erasmus remarked that to lie 'nobly' was, moreover, to hold one's readers in a contempt unbecoming a Christian writer.<sup>96</sup> Erasmus first pointed out this mistake by way of three august Classical examples, Herodotus, Xenophon and Homer. According to Erasmus, Herodotus wrote his history and Xenophon 'described the education of Cyrus, not with the objective of presenting historical truth (*historiae fides*), but of offering a model of the upright prince'.<sup>97</sup> As for Homer, he 'characterized the gods in such a way that no self-respecting city

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<sup>92</sup> See Gorce, 'La Patristique', 255.

<sup>93</sup> VH 1-9.

<sup>94</sup> VH 12-15: Est quidem mira quaedam vulgi credulitas, immo nescio quid penitus insitum animis mortalium, ut ficta lubentius audiant quam gesta, et commenticiis supraque veri fidem fabulis libentius assentiantur quam veris.

<sup>95</sup> VH 23-30.

<sup>96</sup> Augustine, Letter 28, 4-5. For the text see PL 33: 0113-0114.

<sup>97</sup> VH 47-49: Hoc quidem consilio suam historiam contexit Herodotus, hac ratione Xenophon Cyri descripsit institutionem, non ad historiae fidem, sed ad exemplum probi principis.

would want them in civic office’, their wives such that ‘no upright citizen would either desire or tolerate such a spouse in his home’ and their children such that ‘no father in his right mind would wish to have children like them’.<sup>98</sup> But whereas Erasmus could more easily forgive pagan Classical writers for their moralizing falsehoods, it was far worse to see similar falsehoods in works written by Christians and meant to further Christian piety. What Jerome did in his lives of the three hermit-saints Paul, Malchus and Hilarion, then, was exactly what good and responsible Christian historians were *not* meant to do according to the first paragraphs of Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome*.

In the next paragraph Erasmus lashed out fiercely against blundering scholars of the past who had done such wrong to the saints, and especially to Jerome. Having begun his narrative by refusing to have any truck to falsehood, however ‘noble’, Erasmus put forward his belief that ‘nothing is better than to portray the saints just *as they actually were*,<sup>99</sup> and that even if a fault is discovered in their lives this very imperfection turns into an example of piety for us’.<sup>100</sup> After tossing aside ‘sackcloth, hair-shirts, scourgings, prodigious fasts and incredible vigils’ – favourite subjects of Jerome’s three hagiographies – as fictions (*figmenta*) unbecoming true Christian belief,<sup>101</sup> Erasmus continued:

Although an artist may represent ever so much brilliance and light of a jewel, an imitation certainly never reaches a jewel’s genuine sparkle. Truth has its own power, matched by no artifice. Moreover,

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<sup>98</sup> VH 51-61: *Homerus eiusmodi facit deos, cuiusmodi nolit magistratus bene morata civitas. Deinde tales depinxit uxores deorum, qualem nemo probus civis coniugem aut optet domi suae aut ferat. Denique tales finxit deorum filios, ut nemo sanus paterfamilias similes sibi liberos velit obtingere, ut non abs re Plato locum illi negarit in sua republica.*

<sup>99</sup> The italics are mine.

<sup>100</sup> VH 65-67: *Ego nihil arbitror esse rectius quam eiusmodi describere sanctos, cuiusmodi fuerunt ipsi, in quorum vita si quid etiam errati deprehenditur, hoc ipsum nobis vertitur in exemplum pietatis.*

<sup>101</sup> VH 68-73: *Caeterum si quis omnino figmentis delectetur, is si prudenter effingat pii viri simulacrum, quocumque nomine, non sacco, cilicio, flagris, prodigiosis ieiuniis, vigiliis non credendis, sed ex ipsis Christi decretis, sic ut primum Christianae pietatis vim penitus habeat cognitam ac perspectam, deinde scite illius exprimat imaginem, is mihi fortasse tolerabitur.*

who would put up with those writers who, rather than honour the saints for us, debase them with their childish, ignorant, foolish and feeble-minded nonsense?<sup>102</sup>

For Erasmus, such unworthy biographers had served no other Christian writer as poorly as they had Jerome. In a paragraph worth citing at length, Erasmus hurled a kind of humanist *J'accuse* at the shortcomings of his Mediaeval forebears, in which an unnamed writer of Jerome's life took the place of Colonel du Paty de Clam as *l'affaire tout entière*:

...Saint Jerome...was not too fortunate. Although he who had sung the praises of Christ and the saints with a tongue so learned and honeyed was one person who especially deserved to be commended to posterity with an erudition and eloquence equal to his own, he fell – by what stroke of fate I do not know – into the hands of one I must call a ranter, a man so consistently like himself and unlike Jerome that it is uncertain what in him is most astounding – the extraordinary absence of style and eloquence or the conspicuous ignorance of literature or the amazing shamelessness of his lying. This man, were he alive, truly deserves to be buried publicly under a shower of stones hurled by every human hand, since in his view all men are stones, not human beings. Who in reading the frivolous ditties of that fellow, unless he is a complete blockhead, would not immediately sense an actor who has assumed a role and whom calling to mind for us a Vertumnus or a Proteus, is now Eusebius of Cremona, now Cyril, now Augustine, now Ambrose, sometimes, if it be his whim, Damasus, and several times, please God, Jerome himself? But regardless of the plumage he may be arrayed in, when he appears before us, his voice everywhere betrays the cuckoo that he is. Everywhere the same charm of discourse, the same beauty of style! And his stupidity, to go no further, is certainly clear from the fact that he has Jerome a short time before his death entrust his commentaries to Damasus who, according to the testimony of Jerome himself in more than one place, died before him. Yet this author, about whom more will be said elsewhere, so deficient in learning and eloquence that his want of talent can cast a pall of darkness over any theme, however bright, and so dull-witted that his words cannot lend even to the clearest truths the semblance of reality, introduces into the life of Jerome ridiculous tales of miracles and stories of the most shameless falsity. These fictions however he did not invent – were this so, he might have been given credit for some talent – but from the most popular accounts they were twisted in a manner as ridiculous as it was dishonest. How fortunate Jerome was to have so distinguished a herald!...This writer found his readers; he found those to quote him and, more amazingly, scholars like Platina and Volterrano, who, I suspect, never drew those quotations directly from him but had heard them in sermons or had only seen excerpted fragments. A few also imitated this most shameless writer, but so brilliantly that everything appears to be by the same hand. And in these writings you would find neither erudition, nor eloquence, nor prudence, nor diligence, and beyond all this you would find least of all what in historical writing in the prime *desideratum*, namely trustworthiness (*fides*). Is this, I ask, to narrate the lives of the saints or rather to debase them?<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> VH 73-78: Etiam si quantumvis gemmae nitorem ac lucem effingat artifex, certe nativam gemmae vim nunquam assequitur imitatio. Habet suam ἐνέργειαν veritas, quam nullum aequat artificium. At istos quis ferat qui plusquam anilibus deliramentis, infantibus, indoctis, ineptis, divos nobis non celebrant sed contaminant?

<sup>103</sup> VH 79-119: At Divus Hieronymus, nisi quod abunde iuxta Graecorum proverbium αὐτὸς αὐτὸν ἡύλεσεν, hac parte parum erat felix. Propterea quod cum unus praecipue dignus esset ut pari doctrina parique facundia posteris commendaretur, qui tam erudito tamque mellito ore Christi sanctorumque praeconia cecinisset, haud scio quonam fato in rabulam quendam incidit, sic undique sui similem et Hieronymi dissimilem ut nescias quid in eo potissimum admireris, linguaene prodigiosam infantiam ac balbutiem, an insignem litterarum inscitiam, an miram mentiendi impudentiam - hominem profecto dignum, quem si vivat, publicitus omnes omnium mortalium manus saxis obruant, qui mortales universos pro saxis, non pro hominibus habuerit. Quis enim illius legens naenias, ni plane truncus sit, non protinus sentiant personatum histrionem, qui Vertumnum quendam aut Proteum nobis referens, nunc Eusebius est Cremonensis, nunc Cyrillus, nunc Augustinus, nunc Ambrosius, nonnunquam si libeat Damasus, aliquoties ipse si superis placet Hieronymus? Sed quibuscunque plumis nobis opertus prohibet, vox ubique sui similem coccygem arguit. Idem ubique dicendi lepos, eadem sermonis venus.

After this scathing rebuke, Erasmus laid out the historiographical principles that he claimed had guided his own *Life of Jerome*. It is in these words that Brady, Olin and many other scholars see ‘an incisive statement of a critical historical approach’.<sup>104</sup>

I therefore may be unequal to the subject and may lack the support of records that invite confidence; yet in good faith and with all possible care I have constructed the life of the great saint from Prosper, Severus, Orosius, Rufinus (calumniator though he is) and from such other authors whose credibility should not entirely be disregarded, but above all I have based my inquiry into Jerome’s life on the works of Jerome himself. For who would have a better knowledge of Jerome than Jerome himself? Or who would give a truer picture of him? If Julius Caesar is the most dependable authority for his own military exploits, how much more reasonable is it to trust Jerome’s account of his own story? I therefore have looked into all of Jerome’s works and have reduced to narrative form the material I was able to gather from scattered parts of his writings. In doing this I invented nothing, because to me the greatest miracle is the miracle of Jerome as he expresses himself to us in his many works of lasting and pre-eminent quality. And if extravagant tales of wondrous happenings are necessary for the reader’s pleasure, let him take up Jerome’s books, in which there are almost as many miracles as there are opinions.<sup>105</sup>

In his *Life*’s beginning Erasmus staked out truth or trustworthiness – *fides* – as the historian’s highest and foremost goal. In its pursuit, Erasmus promised to leave out all ‘extravagant’ Jerome stories, ‘to invent nothing’ and to weave his tale only from sturdiest yarns: Jerome’s

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Cuius stuporem, ut nihil accedat, hinc certe palam cernere est, quod Hieronymum paulo ante mortem facit Damaso commendantem suos commentarios, quem ipse Hieronymus non uno in loco testatur ante se decessisse vita. Sed hic de quo plura dicuntur alias, tam indoctus et elinguis ut rebus quamlibet claris ingenii sui culpa tenebras possit offundere, tam stupidus ut ne verissima quidem verisimiliter queat efferre, ridicula miraculorum portenta et impudentissimae vanitatis fabulas confert in Hieronymum, nec has tamen ab se repertas, in quo nonnulla laus fuisset ingenii, sed e vulgatissimis historiis huc non minus ridicule quam improbe detortas. O fortunatum tam insigni praecone Hieronymum! Neque vero defuit dignum patellae operculum. Reperit hic scriptor suos lectores; reperit a quibus citetur; et quo magis mireris eruditos, Platinam et Volaterranum, quos equidem vel hinc suspicor ea nunquam legisse, sed aut audisse in contionibus, aut hinc excerpta fragmenta modo vidisse. Imitati sunt impudentissimum scriptorem unus et item alter, sed adeo praeclare ut eiusdem hominis videri possint omnia. In quibus nihil agnoscas, nec eruditionis, nec eloquentiae, nec prudentiae, nec diligentiae; super haec omnia nihil minus quam id quod in primis exigitur in historiographo, nempe fidem. Utrum quaeso istud est, divorum vitas describere, an contaminare potius?

<sup>104</sup> Joseph Coppins, ‘Le Portrait de Saint Jérôme’, in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia*, volume 2, ed. Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Vrin, 1972) 821. See also CWE 61, xxiv.

<sup>105</sup> VH 120-135: Nos igitur, licet impares argumento, tum nullis adiuti commentariis quibus fidi poterat, tamen bona fide quaque licuit diligentia, vitam sanctissimi viri ex Prospero, Severo, Orosio, Ruffino tametsi calumniatore, et si qui sunt alii non omnino contemnendae fidei auctores collegimus; sed potissimum ex ipsius Hieronymi libris Hieronymum evestigavimus. Quis enim rectius noverit Hieronymum quam ipse Hieronymus? Aut quis eum fidelius expresserit? Si rerum a se gestarum certissimus auctor est Iulius Caesar, quanto iustius est Hieronymo sua narranti fidem habere? Ex huius igitur libris omnibus lustratis, quod sparsim adnotare licuit in narrationis ordinem redeamus, nihil admentientes, quod arbitremur abunde magnum esse miraculum, ipsum Hieronymum tot egregiis voluminum monumentis sese nobis exprimentem. Quod si cui nihil absque miraculorum portentis placere potest, is legat Hieronymianos libros in quibus tot paene miracula sunt quot sententiae.

own letters and trustworthy sources dating from the years surrounding the saint's life. Erasmus took pains to set these methods apart from those used by all Jerome's prior biographers. He also went further than many modern scholars in his claims that little, if anything, worthwhile had been written about Jerome before his own efforts.

Erasmus gave readers the impression that the 'ranter' whom he criticized was hitherto the foremost authority on Jerome, if not his only hagiographer. He claimed, moreover, that there was no reliable material about Jerome until his *Life* accurately presented Jerome's life to the Christian public. At best this was misleading, and modern historians claiming that Erasmus conflated all prior biographers into one Mediaeval forger are mistaken.<sup>106</sup> In the above criticism Erasmus most likely had in mind the *Transitus Beati Hieronymi*, a collection of apocryphal writings about the saint.<sup>107</sup> He was surely aware, however, of other lives and writings about Jerome, as he himself admitted in the above passage.<sup>108</sup> What is more, Erasmus knew the twelfth-century churchman Nicholas Maniacutia's *Beati Hieronymi vita* (*Life of Saint Jerome*), which introduced the 1497-1498 Venetian edition of Jerome's commentaries on the Bible, which Erasmus and the Froben used as the *Druckvorlage* for volumes five through nine of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>109</sup> Erasmus also knew the anonymous

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<sup>106</sup> See note 13 to pages 19-23 in CWE 61, 245-246. See Godin, 'Érasme biographe patristique: *Hieronymi Stridonensis Vita*', 350.

<sup>107</sup> Erasmus' description of the 'ranter's' work in his *Life* resembles the *Transitus Beati Hieronymi*.

<sup>108</sup> VH 101-107.

<sup>109</sup> See Dill I, 56-57. Basel University Library holds a copy of this edition of Jerome's commentaries that includes extensive marginal comments in the hands of Johannes Reuchlin, Johannes Cuno and others. This edition, now catalogued under shelf-mark FL II 1, served as a *Druckvorlage* for volumes 5-9 of the 1516 *Edition*. The foreword to volume 7 of the *Edition* advertised that the editors knew of this Venetian edition and had included everything that it included, apocryphal or not. See 1516 *Edition* VII, f. 1v: Non clam me est candide lector, Commentarios in Proverbia Solomonis, quibus primum in hoc tomo locum dedimus, Hieronymi non esse. Nam id vel hinc deprehenditur, quod tota dicendi figura ab Hieronymiana dictione, modis omnibus dissidet. Quin Gregorius semel atque iterum in hoc opere citatur. Vetustissimi quidam codices in membrana scripti, Bedae vindicabant. Certe cuius cuius sint, Hieronymi non esse, ipsi clamant. Sed enim ob id potissimum non omittendos censuimus, ne lector queri possit in hac nostra aeditione pauciora sibi data, quam in Veneta habebantur. For more about this Venetian edition and its printer, Gregorio de' Gregori of Forlì (1496-1527), see *Contemporaries of Erasmus* 2, 126. When rebutting the charges of Edward Lee, Erasmus mentioned

and widespread life of Jerome beginning *Plaerosque nimirum*, probably dating from the ninth century.<sup>110</sup> These two lives accepted certain ‘miraculous’ details about Jerome’s life, but as we shall see below, Erasmus read them and probably used them as sources, even if he did not mention these and other similar sources in the *Life*. Notwithstanding modern historians’ consensus about Erasmus’ skill as an historian and about his ‘modern’ and ‘critical’ approach to hagiography, his pursuit of historical *fides* was not always faithful to the text of Jerome’s letters. Erasmus’ very cautious approach to miracles, for instance, could lead him to overlook or to discount what Jerome did not want overlooked or discounted. Emile Telle went too far when he wrote that the *Life* ‘was more useful to us today in order to understand Erasmus’ idiosyncrasies than to understand the life of Jerome, so much did he force himself to discover in his hero a justification for his own reforming ideas as well as his actions’.<sup>111</sup> Nonetheless, we should understand that Erasmus’ undoubted talent as an historian did not keep him from rhetorical and polemical excesses and from doubtful interpretations of primary material in order to bolster his own projects and prejudices.

Erasmus first brought up the *Somnium Ciceronianum*, for example, in his biographical narrative about Jerome’s early life, in which we find Jerome living as a hermit in the Syrian desert, possessed of a well-stocked library. In an aside, Erasmus mentioned Jerome’s love of the pagan Classics and cited the *Somnium*’s famous source, *Audi filia*, promising to treat this matter at an appropriate place in his biography.<sup>112</sup> Later in the narrative, after giving to readers most of his biographical information about Jerome and taking great pains to prove that Jerome had lost his virginity in his youth, Erasmus feistily defended Jerome against those, from Augustine to sixteenth-century scholars, who accused Jerome of seeming ‘to flare

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Gregorio de’ Gregori (de Gregoriis), although not by name, as the publisher of Bernardino Gadolo’s edition of Jerome’s commentaries on Genesis and the prophets.

<sup>110</sup> *Plaerosque nimirum* is treated in BHL 3870 and in BHL 3871.

<sup>111</sup> Émile Villemeur Telle, *Érasme de Rotterdam et le septième sacrement* (Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1954), 72.

<sup>112</sup> VH 553-561.

up with an intensity exceeding the counsels of Christian forbearance, and in his biting attack on many...to recall something of the spirit of Old Comedy' – that is, the polemic and satire of pagan Antiquity.<sup>113</sup> Erasmus also used the example of the *Somnium* when criticizing those who blamed Jerome for showing off too much eloquence:

Moreover it is painful even to remember the daily growling we hear from some wickedly religious and stupidly learned men who belittle in Jerome what is finest about him. I refer, of course, to his extravagant learning, as they term it themselves, and to his eloquence, which to them is somewhat more than befits a theologian. They know nothing at all about Jerome except that he was pronounced a Ciceronian and scourged. But with regard to this, since a full reply was made by the most learned men Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano, and since I too once in the folly of my youth when less than twenty years of age disported myself against the folly of those men in my *Antibarbari*, I will add here only this one comment.<sup>114</sup>

Having thus set up his treatment of the *Somnium*, Erasmus then began to take a turn at odds with the 'critical' goals and ideas staked out clearly in the first paragraphs of his *Life*. He explained the troublesome *Somnium* to his readers:

Where he was discouraging a young girl from the inordinate study of profane books Jerome says it was not a dream but that upon awakening he found his shoulders black and blue. In his reply to Rufinus, however, he is somewhat amused at the diligence of a man for whom it was not enough to observe what a person says or does during his waking hours but even what he dreams about in his sleep. And he confesses that it was a dream comparable to those strange and amusing events of the night in which he sometimes saw himself take wing and fly with Daedalus over the seas; and sometimes in these dreams his hair was neatly curled (when he was bald), and occasionally dressed in a toga he made speeches at the rostrum in the Forum.<sup>115</sup>

For Erasmus, then, readers had to choose one of two ways of interpreting the *Somnium*:

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<sup>113</sup> VH 1096-1099: Ad haec sunt quos nonnihil offendit sermonis acerbitas, quod in scriptis suis acrius nonnunquam videatur incandescere quam pro Christiana mansuetudine, planeque veteris comoediae quiddam referre, multos mordicus arripiens.

<sup>114</sup> VH 1126-1135: Iam vero piget etiam meminisse, quod audimus quotidie quosdam impie religiosos et inscite doctos nobis ad aurem obgannire, id in Hieronymo calumniantes quod in eo pulcherrimum est, nimirum doctrinam, ut ipsi vocant, immodicam, et plusculum eloquentiae quam theologum deceat. Neque quicquam omnino norunt de Hieronymo, nisi quod Ciceronianus dictus vapularit. Verum huius rei, quoniam ab eruditissimis abunde responsum est, Laurentio Valla et Angelo Politiano, et nos olim adulescentuli minores annis viginti lusimus in istorum stultitiam Dialogis quos Antibarbaros inscripsimus, unum illud hoc adiiciam loco.

<sup>115</sup> VH 1135-1144: Ubi deterret virgunculam ab immodico studio librorum profanorum, negat fuisse somnium, sed experrectum repperisse scapulas liventes. At idem Rufinus respondens satis ridet hominis curiositatem, cui non satis esset observare quid vigilans diceret aut ageret, verum etiam quid dormiens somniaret. Et adeo fatetur fuisse somnium, ut illud conferat cum prodigiosis illis nocturnis ludibriis quibus aliquoties sibi videretur alatus volare cum Daedalo per maria; nonnunquam comatulus esse, cum esset calvaster interdum sumpta toga, causam dicere pro rostris.

Therefore let those people explain how both accounts can be true at the same time, or let them choose which version of Jerome's they prefer to accept. Is it to be that version in which a case is argued and a charge repelled about a matter where the truth of a statement is usually determined by an oath? Thus it was with a fiction that Pythagoras deterred ignorant men from the eating of meat; so too parents sometimes threaten their children with fictitious hobgoblins to keep them from wrongdoing.<sup>116</sup>

For Erasmus, between these two choices the one to take was clear, and he duly tried to back up his own choice by pulling out examples from Jerome's life and letters:

Besides, they have to decide whether they prefer to believe an old man or a youth. It was not a dream, wrote the youth; it was a dream, wrote the old man. If it were an actual experience, that is a vision, and not an empty dream, why does he compare it to the nonsensical events of the usual dreams? Why does he scoff at Rufinus when the latter raises it as an objection? Or let them explain this difficulty. In the presence of the tribunal he said: 'If ever in the future I have secular books in my possession, I have denied you.' Why then does not Jerome refute Rufinus' objection about the dialogues of Cicero which at great expense he had arranged to be copied for the brothers or the objection about the poets whom he lectured on to boys? And his treatment of this count of the accusation is more in the nature of sport than of serious refutation; doubtless he deems the charge more deserving of ridicule than rebuttal. Where then does Jerome deny that he had secular books or hide the fact? Or if he had denied it, what sane man would have believed him? Unless perchance we think it reasonable that when in his treatise about the best kind of translation he recalls word for word very many lines from Cicero he drew upon the memory of his youth for all these lines, not upon a copy of Cicero's work.<sup>117</sup>

Erasmus ended his treatment of the Cicero dream with a rebuke of Jerome's critics and with a pointed defence of the doctor's great learning in the pagan Classics, attacking in turn the scholastics' own inappropriate use of pagan writers as well as their character and integrity:

Finally, if it is a chargeable offence to have secular books and if a reader of such works has denied Christ, why was Jerome the only one to be flogged for this? Why today in the schools of theology does Aristotle enjoy higher esteem than Paul or Peter? But more than enough has already been said on this childish and ridiculous subject. I at least, to conclude, would prefer to be flogged with Jerome than to be anointed with honey in the company of those who obviously are so terrified by the dream of Jerome

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<sup>116</sup> VH 1145-1152: Expediant igitur isti, qui simul utrumque verum esse possit; aut elegant utro in loco malint Hieronymo habere fidem – illic ubi de fide narrationis non agitur, sed quocunque modo deterretur adolescentula, an hic ubi causa agitur et crimen depellitur, qua in re veritas orationis etiam iureiurando solet exigi. Quomodo commento Pythagoras rudes homines a carnium ingluvie deterruit; sic et parentes nonnunquam commenticiis terriculis pueros a peccando submovent.

<sup>117</sup> VH 1152-1167: Praeterea videant utrum credere malint seni an adolescenti? Somnium non fuisse, scripsit adolescentulus; somnium fuisse, scripsit senex. Si verum sit somnium, id est si visio, non somnium inane, cur illud confert cum ludibriis vulgare somniorum? Cur deridet obiicientem? Aut hunc nodum explicent. Dixit apud tribunal: 'Si unquam habuero libros saeculares, te negavi.' Cur post haec non refellit Hieronymus, quod obiicit Rufinus de Ciceronis Dialogis quos maiore mercede fratribus scribendos locarit, de poetis quos praelegit pueris? Et in hac accusationis parte ita versatur, ut ludat magis quam refellat: nimirum crimen iudicans dignius quod rideretur quam dilueretur. Ubi deinde negat aut dissimulat Hieronymus sibi fuisse libros saeculares? Aut si negasset, quis sanus illi fuerat crediturus? Nisi forte consentaneum vero putemus, cum in libro de optimo genere interpretandi plurimos versus ad verbum ex Cicerone referat, eum hos omnes ex adolescentiae memoria descripsisse, non de codice.



that they very piously abstain from all Classical literature – without, however, abstaining from the vices of the authors whose books out of scrupulosity they do not dare to open.<sup>118</sup>

From here Erasmus criticized modern theologians yet more before launching into a lengthy, stylized panegyric of Jerome.<sup>119</sup> In chapter seven of this thesis we shall look in greater detail at the larger context of Erasmus' efforts to prove that Jerome's *Somnium* did not condemn pagan Classical learning. For now, we can remark that by drawing his evidence from the soundest authority of Jerome's letters and by claiming mastery of them, Erasmus wished his readers to believe that Jerome had never, in any of his writings, denied reading pagan Classical literature after the fateful *Somnium*.<sup>120</sup>

Erasmus knew, however, that Jerome had denied reading pagan books after the *Somnium*. In the foreword to his commentaries on the third book to the Galatians addressed to Paula and to Eustochium, Jerome unmistakably stated that he had not read any pagan Classical works for at least fifteen years after the *Somnium*. He claimed, moreover, that he had recalled from memory any quotations which he had used since then in his writings:

You yourselves know that for more than fifteen years no book of Cicero, of Vergil or of any pagan writer has come into my hands: and if ever I quote something from them, it crept in, as though I had remembered it through the cloud of an old dream.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> VH 1168-1176: Postremo si crimen est habere libros saeculares, et si Christum negavit quisquis hoc legit, cur solus vapulavit Hieronymus? Cur hodie in theologorum scholis celebrior est Aristoteles quam Paulus aut Petrus? Verum de re puerili ac ridicula iam pluribus quam sat est. Ego certe, ut finiam, malim cum Hieronymo vapulare, quam melle perungi cum istis quos adeo scilicet terret Hieronymianum somnum, ut ab omnibus bonis litteris sanctissime temperent, at non temperantes interim a vitiis eorum quorum libros religionis causa non audent attingere.

<sup>119</sup> David J. Collins, 'A Life Reconstituted: Jacobus de Voragine, Erasmus of Rotterdam and their *Lives of Saint Jerome*', in *Medievalia et Humanistica* 25 (1998): 35-36.

<sup>120</sup> VH 1163-1164: Ubi deinde negat aut dissimulat Hieronymus sibi fuisse libros saeculares? Aut si negasset, quis sanus illi fuerat crediturus?

<sup>121</sup> PL 26, 0399: Nostis enim et ipsae, quod plus quam quindecim anni sunt, ex quo in manus meas numquam Tullius, numquam Maro, numquam gentilium litterarum quilibet Auctor ascendit: et si quid forte inde dum loquimur, obrepit, quasi antiqui per nebulam somnii recordamur. Quod autem profecerim ex linguae illius infatigabili studio, aliorum iudicio derelinquo: ego quid in mea amiserim, scio.

From his *Annotations* to the New Testament, we know that Erasmus had read Jerome's commentaries on Galatians. Erasmus was aware of Jerome's words that directly contradicted the arguments which he made in his *Life of Jerome*.<sup>122</sup> Erasmus, however, did not treat this passage in his *Life* or in his commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*. What is more, in his *Life* Erasmus explained Jerome's *Somnium* with arguments that we would hardly foresee given his powerful introductory words about the need for truth in history-writing and about the harmfulness of even 'noble' untruths in saints' lives. For Erasmus claimed in his *Life* that the powerful witness found in Jerome's letter *Audi filia* was in fact a 'noble lie' meant to steer his charge away from readings that might undermine her quest to keep her virginity.<sup>123</sup>

When we consider what Jerome actually wrote in *Audi filia* and later in his *Contra Rufinum* (*Apology Against Rufinus*), Erasmus' explanation of the *Somnium* is not altogether convincing.<sup>124</sup> In *Audi filia*, Jerome rattled off a long list of vices and counselled about how to avoid 'many traps with which the skilful foe besieges us'.<sup>125</sup> He then recounted his *Somnium*, framing his narrative with a stark contrast between 'Christ's cup' – the Gospels, the Psalms and Paul's letters – with pagan Classical letters, which he called the 'cups of demons':

Do not wish to appear too learned or cheerfully in metre to play lyrical songs. Do not, as one given over to pleasure, take on the weak pronunciation of those women who now with clenched teeth, now with open mouths, govern their tongues in halved words, thinking crude all that is well-pronounced. So much does adultery please them, even if only adultery of the tongue! 'What does darkness have to do with light? What does Christ have to do with Belial?' What has Horace to do with the Psalter? Vergil with the Gospels? Cicero with the Apostle? Would not your brother be scandalized to see you eating in an idol's temple? And even if 'all things are pure to the pure and nothing to be thrown away that can be

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<sup>122</sup> This foreword was included in the 1516 *Edition*. See 1516 *Edition* IX, f. 93v-94r. Erasmus' first annotation to this letter to the Galatians begins with the word 'Hieronymus', and Erasmus cited Jerome heavily throughout his annotations. See 1516 *Novum Instrumentum*, pages 509-522.

<sup>123</sup> VH 1149-1152: Quomodo commento Pythagoras rudes homines a carnium ingluvie deterruit; sic et parentes nonnunquam commenticiis terculis pueros a peccando submovent.

<sup>124</sup> See Jerome's cagey talk about his dream in his *Contra Rufinum* 1: 30-31 (PL 23).

<sup>125</sup> Jerome, Letter 22, 29: Variis callidus hostis pugnat insidiis.

taken in with thanksgiving', all the same we ought not to drink both the cup of Christ and the cup of daemons. I shall tell you a story of my own unhappy lot.<sup>126</sup> After these words Jerome recounted his *Somnium*, which took place in the middle of Lent. He was swept up to a heavenly trial and accused of being a Ciceronian, not a Christian. Jerome claimed to Eustochium that he woke up from this dream with shoulders bruised from the beating which he had endured during his vision. It was, he insisted, a true vision and no mere dream: 'Nor was this dream one of those vain dreams by which we are often deceived.'<sup>127</sup> In his *Life* Erasmus tried to write off Jerome's *Somnium* by claiming that it was one of the 'noble lies' which he had just condemned in the opening paragraphs of his *Life*. In this case, it was a lie that could cast suspicion on all true divine visions and that would be, according to what Erasmus told us earlier, an insult to the intelligence and to the piety of the learned and noble young woman to whom Jerome was writing.<sup>128</sup> In order to come to this conclusion in stark opposition to the 'critical' principles that he had staked out in the *Life*'s first paragraphs, Erasmus discounted Jerome's own clear words from *Audi filia* and from the introduction to his commentaries on the third book to the Galatians. Erasmus did this without giving his readers much good reason for such treatment.

In rejecting the idea that after the *Somnium* Jerome had refrained from reading pagan Classical literature, Erasmus was preaching to a large crowd of contemporary learned men, if not to *the* crowd. For this reason, Erasmus' interpretation of Jerome's words in his *Contra Rufinum* seems to me not only somewhat unnecessary in a world where most religious and laymen learnt their Latin through Cicero, but also more wishful thinking than sound textual

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<sup>126</sup> Jerome, Letter 22, 29: Nec tibi diserta multum velis videri aut lyricis festiva carminibus metro ludere. Non delumbem matronarum salivam delicata seceris, quae nunc strictis dentibus, nunc labiis dissolutis balbutientem linguam in dimidiata verba moderantur, rusticum putantes omne quod nascitur. Adeo illis adulterium etiam linguae placet. 'Quae enim communicatio luci ad tenebras? Qui consensus Christo et Belial?' Quid facit cum psalterio Horatius? Cum evangeliiis Maro? Cum apostolo Cicero? Nonne scandalizatur frater, si te viderit in idolio recumbentem? Et licet 'omnia munda mundis et nihil reiciendum sit, quod cum gratiarum actione percipitur', tamen simul bibere non debemus calicem Christi et calicem daemoniorum. Referam tibi meae infelicitatis historiam.

<sup>127</sup> Jerome, Letter 22, 30: Nec vero sopor ille fuerat aut vana somnia quibus saepe deludimur.

<sup>128</sup> VH 23-30.

analysis. Whereas Erasmus remarked that we could not believe Jerome's claims not to have read Cicero in later life, in his *Contra Rufinum* Jerome hemmed, hawed and left room for readers to believe that he had drawn from memory all his quotations from the pagan Classics and that he had not directly read any word of pagan Classical literature since the *Somnium*.<sup>129</sup> This is to say nothing of Jerome's clear words to Paula and to Eustochium in the introduction to his commentaries on the third book to the Galatians.<sup>130</sup> Later in his commentaries to *Audi filia*, Erasmus showed much the same reaction to and explanation of the sources. He justified his interpretation of the *Somnium* not by 'critical' historical methods but by exaggerated criticism of unnamed opponents:

They have nothing to do with it lest by chance unwittingly they might come upon some word of Cicero and be flogged with Jerome. At the same time they consider themselves very close to the Apostles if their language is as coarse as possible. But when Saint Jerome replies to Rufinus, who reproached him with this passage, he calls the incident a dream, although here he denies that it was a dream. Nor did Jerome ever think that Cicero should not be read; rather that we ought to read him at least to gain a better understanding of theology and to handle it more skilfully. What else is he saying in his letter to the orator Magnus? But these people, although they grow old spending their entire life with sophistical nonsense and in meaningless quarrels over petty issues, pride themselves on having had nothing to do with good authors. Consequently Leo X, who occupied the Roman see when I wrote this, decreed that no one in those public schools which are called universities should devote all his energy for more than five years so exclusively to rhetoric and poetry that he neglect more wholesome literature. And indeed this prohibition with regard to poetry also applied to philosophy. I also in my younger days wrote a work criticizing the stupid fanaticism of those who under the pretext of religion rail at more polished literature because they have not been acquainted with it. We owe it to them that the authors most worthy of being read are the authors that have been the most corrupted. Thanks to them it has also happened that more labour has been expended by several scholars in restoring the works of Jerome than he himself spent in writing them. What is more, there are sacrilegious men who dare to call a man of his stature and holiness poetic and less than devout because he does not write *quaestiones* in the style of Duns Scotus. As if Paul or the prophets or any of the old and truly Christian theologians wrote in that way. Not even Aristotle himself, a pagan and not a man of approved life among the philosophers...talked as much sophistical nonsense as those people do who call themselves doctors and interpreters of Holy Scripture.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Pease treats Jerome's self-defence in 'Jerome and Pagan Literature', 156. See Jerome's *Contra Rufinum* 1: 30 in PL 23, 0423 B-C.

<sup>130</sup> The Mediaeval canon-lawyer Giovanni Andrea, at whose *Hieronymianus* we shall be looking in the below chapters, found in Jerome's writings, including the introduction to his commentaries on the third book to the Galatians, convincing evidence supporting the idea that Jerome had abstained wholly or almost wholly from pagan letters since the *Somnium*. See 1514 *Hieronymianus*, f. 20v.

<sup>131</sup> See the *Scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Cum ante annos plurimos* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 61v: ...et tum sibi videntur apostolis proximi, si quam spurcissime loquantur. At divus Hieronymus cum Ruffino locum hunc obiicienti respondet, somnium vocat, etiam si hic somnium fuisse neget. Nec hoc unquam sensit Hieronymus Ciceronem non esse legendum: sed in hoc duntaxat, ut divina rectius intelligamus, et commodius tractemus. Alio qui quid sibi vult, quod scribit ad Oratorem Magnum? At isti, cum universam vitam in nugis sophisticis et inanissimis quaestiuncularum rixis consenescent, sibi placent, quod nihil attigerint bonorum authorum. Unde

For all their rhetorical force, such words provided little, if any, evidence to bolster Erasmus' interpretation of the *Somnium* or to explain why we ought to take Jerome's quip about the *Somnium* in one of his polemical letters against Rufinus over the clear and powerful testimony in *Audi filia* and in the introduction to his commentaries on the letter to the Galatians.

In his biting and questionable words about contemporary scholars' not reading Cicero, Erasmus did not even try to explain the fact that in *Audi filia*, Jerome used the *Somnium* in order to shore up his larger point that pagan Classical letters were the 'cup of daemons' having no part with the Gospels, the Psalms or Paul's letters.<sup>132</sup> In this carefully written letter that Jerome praised and recommended throughout his career,<sup>133</sup> Jerome's example is in marked contrast to Augustine's, who in his *Confessions* powerfully evoked Cicero's lost work *Hortensius* as the first spark that eventually led him from his Manichean backsliding to his later conversion to the Catholic Faith.<sup>134</sup> To take the words of Peter Brown: 'The great Jerome would wake trembling from a dream in which Christ had called him a "Ciceronian

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recte statuit Leo decimus, qui cum haec scriberem Romanam tenebat sedem, ne quis in scholis publicis, quas universitates vocant, ultra quinque annos sic in rhetoricis, aut poeticis litteris studium omnem consumeret, ut nihil attingeret salutarium litterarum. Verum quod vetuit in poeticis, idem vetuit in philosophicis. Nos quoque pueri quondam libris aliquot istorum stolidam superstitionem explosimus, qui praetextu religionis politiores litteras, quia non didicerint, insectantur. His acceptum ferimus, quod authorum, ut quisque est lectu dignissimus, ita depravatissimum habemus. Horum opera factum est, et ut in restituendo Hieronymo, doctis aliquot plus sudoris impensum sit, quam ipse insumpserit scribendo. Quin insuper sacri legi tantum ac tam sacrum virum, audent vocare poeticum, parumque religiosum, quod non scribat quaestiones Scotico stilo. Quasi vero Paulus aut prophetae, aut omnino quisque veterum ac vere Christum spirantium theologorum, ad istum scripserit modum. Ne ipse quidem Aristoteles homo gentilis, nec inter philosophos probatae vitae, qui tantum auri reliquerit, ut a Plinio inter Croesos et Crassos referatur, deinde talium argutiarum pater, unquam tam sophistice nugatus est, quam nugantur isti, qui se divinarum litterarum doctores et interpretes vocant.

<sup>132</sup> See Robert Black, 'The Renaissance and the Middle Ages: Chronologies, Ideologies, Geographies', in *Renaissance? Perceptions of Continuity and Discontinuity in Europe*, 33. See also essays included in *Rhetoric of Cicero in Its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, eds. Virginia Cox, John O. Ward (Boston: Brill, 2006).

<sup>133</sup> Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 101.

<sup>134</sup> Augustine, *Confessiones* 3, 4.

not a Christian''. Augustine was untroubled by nightmares.'<sup>135</sup> In a letter to Jacob Colonna, Bishop of Lombez (d. 1318), Petrarch, the godfather of humanism, highlighted this important difference between Jerome and his favourite, Augustine:

Never did my Augustine, dragged in dreams, go to a tribunal of the eternal judge, as did your Jerome; never did he hear that he was condemned for being a Ciceronian, whereas when Jerome heard this he promised that he would never again read the gentiles' books; and you know that afterwards he diligently abstained from all of these, and especially from Cicero.<sup>136</sup>

Notwithstanding his undoubted admiration for Jerome, Petrarch understood the *Somnium* as Jerome most probably meant it to be understood; that is, as a powerful condemnation of pagan Classical literature and learning. This was in marked contrast to Augustine, who seemed to take pagan Classical learning for granted,<sup>137</sup> as well as to another of the four great doctors of the Latin Church, Ambrose. According to Brown, the latter represented an earlier generation of Christians who did not have 'any scruples about borrowing from the pagans: he gloried in being able to parade his spoils from the pulpit – "the gold of the Egyptians" was fair prize'.<sup>138</sup> Whereas Jerome's many condemnations of pagan Classical literature in *Audi filia* and elsewhere must be taken with some grains of salt, since writings from his whole literary career were full of Classical allusions and citations,<sup>139</sup> Jerome clearly had serious misgivings about the use and goodness of pagan Classical literature which he did not hide. These misgivings were far from Erasmus' attitude towards the pagan Classics, which was more similar to Augustine's than to Jerome's.<sup>140</sup> All told, Jerome's views might have been

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<sup>135</sup> Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 265.

<sup>136</sup> See Petrarch 2, 9 in *Familiars*, tr. Ugo Dotti, ed. V. Rossi (Urbino: Argalia, 1970): Numquam enim in somniis ad tribunal eterni ludicis tractus accesserat Augustinus meus, sicut Hieronymus tuus; nunquam exprobrari sibi Ciceronianum nomen audierat; quod cum audiisset Hieronymus fidemque dedisset quod nunquam amplius libros gentilium attingeret, quam diligenter ab omnibus, sed a Cicerone praesertim, abstineret nosti.

<sup>137</sup> See Peter Brown, 'Augustine the Bishop in the Light of New Documents', in *Patristica* (2001): 1-22.

<sup>138</sup> Peter Brown, *Augustine*, 84.

<sup>139</sup> For one outstanding example see Jerome, Letter 57 (to Pammachius, *Paulus Apostolus*).

<sup>140</sup> Wiesen, *Saint Jerome as a Satirist*, 195.

closer to those of the unnamed scholars whom Erasmus attacks in his *Life* than to the more welcoming views about pagan Classical learning that Erasmus championed throughout his literary career. At the very least one will never find Cicero or other Classical writers called the ‘cup of daemons’ in Erasmus’ writings. It seems clear to me that Erasmus and Jerome had very different ideas about the proper role of pagan Classical learning for Christian believers, differences worth keeping in mind as we continue to look more closely at Erasmus’ interpretations of Jerome’s writings and life. Whereas Pierpaolo Vergerio, Erasmus and other Renaissance and Mediaeval scholars presented Jerome as an example of someone who properly used pagan Classical learning in the service of the Church, from reading Jerome’s writings one could easily come away believing that the saint was most wary about pagan Classical learning and condemned it more than he thought it useful.<sup>141</sup>

Erasmus’ interpretation of Jerome’s *Somnium* was at odds with the principles that he put forward in the *Life*’s beginning. What is more, his interpretation was of questionable validity given the textual source at hand, and it did not responsibly, much less ‘critically’, take into account the context in which Jerome wrote *Audi filia*. Erasmus claimed to have written an accurate history of what really happened in Jerome’s life without adding anything not found in Jerome’s writings or in those of other trustworthy contemporary sources.<sup>142</sup> Nevertheless, when he wrote his *Life* he had polemical goals and wished to affect contemporary Christians and Christendom.<sup>143</sup> For this reason, his explanations of the ‘facts’ of Jerome’s life did not always accurately and ‘critically’ present what Jerome wrote and who Jerome was or might have been. Rice and many other scholars have stressed at the same time that Erasmus’ *Life* was both a ‘witty polemical tract unabashedly relevant to contemporary

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<sup>141</sup> John McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), xi; 14; 179.

<sup>142</sup> VH 125-133.

<sup>143</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 132. Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 313.

concerns' as well as the first 'critical' life of the saint which aimed to tell Jerome's life as it truly was. Yet, to make this claim may be to try to have one's historical cake and to eat it too. Frazier clearly identifies this problem in her treatment of Mediaeval Italian hagiographies when she notes that an 'author's evaluation of the *content* of his source texts was a complex matter, being at once critical (i.e., concerned with the historical reality of the saint) and rhetorical (i.e., concerned with the choice of topics and presentation to shape the audience's response)'.<sup>144</sup> In the above examples and in many more that we shall see in this thesis, Erasmus' polemical and rhetorical goals skewed his representation of Jerome's life and led him to interpret Jerome and his writings in such a way as to further these goals. In this respect Erasmus was not unlike Mediaeval hagiographers who accepted unsubstantiated and apocryphal stories about Jerome for the sake of the moral and of the spiritual 'truths' that they wished to impress upon their readers. Frazier notes that 'concerns about factual and rhetorical truths were not new' to humanist scholarship. In this thesis we shall see that many biographers of Jerome before Erasmus cared about 'factual truth' and that Erasmus indulged in not a few 'rhetorical truths' in his *Life*. Erasmus' commitments to certain 'rhetorical truths', moreover, likely spurred him to misinterpret, to explain away or to overlook certain 'factual truths' of Jerome's life and times.

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<sup>144</sup> Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 18.



## PART I: CHAPTER II

### ‘CRITICAL’ HISTORY BEFORE ERASMUS

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that all past history-writing worthy of the name was done in the attempt, however unachieved or unwitting, to write ‘modern’ history.

However little known the feelings or views of an earlier writer of history may be on his first coming under the gaze of ‘modern’ historians, this truth is so well fixed in the latter’s minds that he is at once thought their rightful, if unwhole, intellectual property and heritage.

From modern historians Erasmus has won no small acclaim for his *Life of Jerome*. Although many remarkable scholars were working on the 1516 Jerome *Edition* for more than seven years before Erasmus went to Basel, Erasmus did more than anyone else to re-arrange, to index and to edit all of Jerome’s letters, as well as the apocryphal works, or *spuria*, that fill the first four of the *Edition*’s nine volumes.<sup>145</sup> What is more, Erasmus undertook to explain these letters through commentaries comprising brief summaries at the beginning of each letter (*argumenta*), explanations of chosen passages (*scholia*) and sharper tracts against what he deemed misreadings and misunderstandings of Jerome’s writings (*antidoti*).

Few are the scholarly works about these commentaries, by far Erasmus’ greatest contribution to the 1516 *Edition*. Legion, however, is scholarly praise of Erasmus’ biography

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<sup>145</sup> Rice mentions the most well-known of these scholars in *Saint Jerome*, 118: three Amerbach brothers, Bruno, Basilius and Boniface, Beatus Rhenanus, Gregor Reisch, John Cuno of Nuremburg, Johannes Reuchlin and Conrad Pellikan. For more thorough details see Dill I, 115-163, especially page 157.

of Jerome found at the beginning of the *Edition*'s first volume.<sup>146</sup> Such praise spans languages, nations, ages and analyses of the *Life of Jerome*'s text as different as the scholars behind them. However different their priorities and personalities, almost all scholars have agreed that the *Life* is an example, if not the first example, of 'critical' and of 'modern' history-writing. In the coming pages we shall be looking more closely at Erasmus' proclamation of such 'critical' principles and at his use of them in the *Life of Jerome*, which Peter Bietenholz and many other historians have called a 'modern', 'critical' and ground-breaking work that 'can be counted as the first scholarly biography of the Church Father'.<sup>147</sup> Before turning to Erasmus' writings, we first need to look at an important question: what was, after all, 'critical' history ?

I do not think that it is an unfair summary of the above historians' work to state that they generally agree about three things which set Erasmus' 'critical' history or biography apart from prior 'fictions' and 'hagiography': Erasmus consciously sought to attain to historical truthfulness or *fides* ('faithfulness') in his portrayal of Jerome; he included abundant examples from and skilful analysis of supposedly trustworthy contemporary sources in order to weave together his narrative; and he ignored the miraculous as 'fiction' unworthy of belief. For historians of the *Life* such as Olin and Clausi, it is wholly acceptable that such 'critical' history tried to present its conclusions in a way such as to serve a larger goal, which for Erasmus was to change Christian life and practice by bringing it more into line with what he believed to be the purer, truer practices of ancient Christians, fruits of that 'old and true'

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<sup>146</sup> For a summary of this literature please see the introduction to this thesis.

<sup>147</sup> Peter G. Bietenholz, 'Erasmus von Rotterdam und der Kult des Heiligen Hieronymus', in *Poesis et Pictura. Festschrift für Dichter Wuttke*, eds. S. Füssel and J. Knappe (Baden Baden: Verlag Valentin Koerner, 1989), 191.

theology which Erasmus and many other humanist contemporaries saw in the history and in the writings of the Church's first centuries.<sup>148</sup>

If we accept this as our definition of 'critical history', even the quickest look into the Renaissance and Mediaeval pasts will show us that 'critical' histories, ideas and methods abounded before Erasmus had ever made his way onto Europe's stage.<sup>149</sup> Without doubt, the 1516 Jerome *Edition* was a ground-breaking achievement of Patristic scholarship, and no less remarkable was the work of Erasmus and of other Froben editors to finish, to polish and to publish it.<sup>150</sup> Erasmus was not, however, Jerome's first biographer or hagiographer to understand and to emphasize the importance of contemporary sources in order to understand his life and to tell its story, to care about factual truth, not to see miracles as a needed component of his greatness and to prize and to praise Jerome's eloquence and learning put to the service of the Church and of the Christian Faith. If the term 'critical history' has or is to have any lasting usefulness in this case, or in any case, we must better explain what it means to us. From my understanding of the term as it has been hitherto used in writings about Erasmus' *Life*, this work was clearly not critical history's first example.

Let us begin by looking at Erasmus' search for 'historical truth' (*historiae fides*) in the *Life*. To be sure, Erasmus was trying to create a portrait of Jerome's life and times that would be truer and more faithful than those that had come before his work. Widely available secondary sources, however, have already shown us that Erasmus was not the first Christian historian to have worried about the factual accuracy and the historical truth of saints' lives. In his *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, Rice himself writes that many of Jerome's biographers

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<sup>148</sup> Examples of this attitude are commonplace. See Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 7. See also Dill I, 74.

<sup>149</sup> See an interesting example in Maffeo Vegio's (1407-1458) biography of Saint Bernardino. See Remo Guidi, 'Maffeo Vergio Agiografo di S. Bernardino da Siena', in *Aspetti religiosi nelle letteratura del quattrocento*, volume 2 (Roma, Vicenza: L.I.E.F., 1974): 65-96.

<sup>150</sup> See Bietenholz, *History and Biography*, 97.

before Erasmus, such as the fifth prior of the Grande-Chartreuse, Guigues du Châtel (1083-1137), cared about the accuracy and truthfulness of their accounts and were ‘not without critical sense’.<sup>151</sup> Clausi’s more detailed treatment of Guigues’ scholarly work has shown that he wished to clean up the mistakes which had crept into Jerome’s letters and to point out what were clearly apocryphal letters.<sup>152</sup> Alison Frazier’s *Possible Lives* shows us that there was an abiding concern for truthfulness in biographies of the saints throughout the Mediaeval and Renaissance periods.<sup>153</sup> In his *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, Daniel Russo makes it clear that many of Jerome’s biographers showed a ‘critical’, truth-seeking spirit centuries before Erasmus, whether in lives of Jerome dating from late Antiquity, such as the unattributed life beginning *Plaerosque nimirum*, or in the twelfth-century churchman Nicholas Maniacutia’s *Beati Hieronymi Vita* (‘Life of Saint Jerome’), both of which drew widely from Jerome’s writings and from other contemporary sources.<sup>154</sup> Comparing Maniacutia’s *Beati Hieronymi Vita* with Erasmus’ *Life*, Rice remarked:

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<sup>151</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 47.

<sup>152</sup> See his letter to the Chartreux of Durbon in *Lettres des premiers Chartreux*, volume 1 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1962), 214: Inter caetera catholicorum virorum, quae ad eruditionem fidelium elaboraverunt opera, quae nostra quoque parvitas congregare studuit vel emendare, etiam epistolas beati Hieronymi quotquot potuimus, undecumque quaesitas et pro concessa a deo facultate mendacis expurgatas, in unum grande volumen redeimus. Abscidimus autem ab eis quasdam, quas vel ex aliorum doctorum scriptis, vel ex styli sententiarumque distantia, titulo tanti viri comperimus indignas. See Clausi and Vincenza Milazzo, ‘Una storia (non) tutta romana: L’Editio Princeps delle *Epistolae* di Gerolamo’, in *Editiones Principes delle opere dei padri greci e latini*, ed. Mariarosa Cortesi (Firenze: SISMEL, 2006), 57-66. See page 65, where we see what Giovanni Andrea wrote about Guigues in his *Hieronymianus*: Et autem sciendum quod de Parisius accepi quandam epistolam fratris Guithonis maioris prioris Carthusiensis (cuius grandis opinio perdurat in Ordine) et postmodum illius transcriptum apud Carthusium fore percepi. In qua scribens ad Verbonenses fratres asserit quasdam epistolas attribui Hieronimo que non fuerunt ipsius. Quas singulas in processu signabo. Inter illas autem ponit istam, licet eam commendat ut nobili stilo conscriptam.

<sup>153</sup> Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 18. The potential author’s evaluation of the *content* of his source texts was a complex matter, being at once critical (i.e., concerned with the historical reality of the saint) and rhetorical (i.e., concerned with the choice of topics and presentation to shape the audience’s response). Again, concerns about factual and rhetorical truths were not new. Thirteenth-century Dominicans, for example, specialized in the ‘critical’ approach. The annotations that Master General Humbert of Romans made in 1254, as he proposed revisions to the entries about saints in the Dominican lectionary, evince a historiographical astuteness that few humanists equaled. But the same type of critical evaluation so expertly used by Humbert – identifying sources, ascertaining authorship, assessing the literary and cultic presentation on the basis of external evidence – continued in the Renaissance.

<sup>154</sup> See Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 20-21. See also, Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 108-109.

...the theoretical principle on which [Erasmus'] method rested was hardly new; after all, Nicholas Maniacutia's had been the same: use only contemporary sources, compose the chronological narrative from the biographical data scattered throughout Jerome's own works...and supplement this material with relevant evidence drawn from the genuine works of Jerome's contemporaries – Prosper of Aquitaine, Sulpicius Severus, Augustine, Orosius and Rufinus.<sup>155</sup>

Without having a clearer definition of the term, we might label as 'critical' history even the Mediaeval *Legenda Aurea* (*The Golden Legend*) and Giovanni Andrea's *Hieronymianus*, both of which we shall be looking at below in greater detail. At the very least, parts of both works are unmistakably 'critical' according to the above criteria. Russo and Tobias Leuker have also shown us that not all prior lives of Jerome mentioned his supposed miracles. But we cannot simply write off lives that did include details about miracles, such as the *Legenda Aurea* and the *Hieronymianus*, as 'uncritical' history. Russo is right to stress that these lives' inclusion of 'miraculous' tales is quite simply the 'illustration of a history at the same time supernatural and *normal for a Christian*'.<sup>156</sup>

It bears repeating here the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*' pithy remark that until rather recently in European history, 'a properly attested miracle story was, after all, thought to be a real event'.<sup>157</sup> Today a properly attested miracle is still thought to be a real event by many Catholics. Therefore, for many Christian writers, to find out and to retell miraculous stories about the saints of old was to further historical truth as they understood it. It is also important to understand that in the Middle Ages properly attested miracles were needed, as today, in order to support the formal process of canonizing a potential saint. Given this context, in Mediaeval lives we often see emphasis on miracles that took place after a saint's death.<sup>158</sup> This is exactly what we see in several apocryphal and miracle-rich Mediaeval forgeries treating Jerome's life, whose authorship is now ascribed to Pseudo-Eusebius,

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<sup>155</sup> Rice, *Saint Jérôme*, 129-130.

<sup>156</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 194. The italics are Russo's.

<sup>157</sup> Joseph R. Strayer, *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, volume 6 (New York: Scribner, 1982-1989), 260.

<sup>158</sup> Dr. Heinrich Kühn pointed this out to me in a conversation that took place in Munich in March 2012.

Pseudo-Augustine and Pseudo-Cyril. These forgeries became very prominent in fourteenth and fifteenth-century writing and iconography.<sup>159</sup> In order to understand the context of Erasmus' *Life*, it would help us to keep in mind that the 'miraculous' was as real and as true to writers and to readers of Mediaeval and Renaissance lives of Jerome as it is 'fantastic' to many readers today. In his *Augustine of Hippo*, Peter Brown remarks that Platonists aside, most religious thinkers in Augustine's day were strict materialists for whom the divine was an element as surely as were fire, water, earth and air.<sup>160</sup> From looking at his spiritual writings it is clear that Erasmus shared this belief in the material reality of the spirit with his Mediaeval and Ancient forebears. He and Jerome's prior biographers all believed that the spirit was as something at least as real as flesh, and more worthy of attention.

In the *Legenda Aurea* we find many accounts of miracles performed by the divine power through the saints. Jacobus de Voragine (c.1230-1289), a Dominican monk and later Archbishop of Genoa from 1292 until his death in 1298, wrote this widely popular lectionary in the 1260s.<sup>161</sup> Voragine's retelling of the lives, deeds, deaths and miracles of about 150 martyrs and saints remained one of the most widely available collections of saints' lives well into Erasmus' lifetime. The life of Jerome in the *Legenda*, when compared with other lives in this collection, stands out for its size.<sup>162</sup> Even if more than a third of Voragine's life of Jerome treated details about Jerome's miracles, from his analysis David Collins has

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<sup>159</sup> See Tobias Leucker, 'Eine "Kritische" *Hieronymus-Vita* des Quattrocento', in *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 83 (Rome: Deutsches Historisches Institut, 2003), 111. These apocryphal Mediaeval letters include Pseudo-Eusebius Cremonensis, *De morte Hieronymi* (PL 22, 239-282), Pseudo-Augustinus, *Ad Cyrillum Hierosolymitanum episcopum de magnificentis beati Hieronymi* (PL 22, 282-289; Pseudo-Cyrillus, *De miraculis Hieronymi ad sanctum Augustinum episcopum Hipponensem* (PL 22, 289-326). For the popularity of these works see Bietenholz, 'Kult des Hieronymus', 193. See also Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 193.

<sup>160</sup> Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 85.

<sup>161</sup> Collins, 'A Life Reconstituted', 33.

<sup>162</sup> Collins, 'A Life Reconstituted', 33-34.

nevertheless labelled it a work of ‘critical’ history.<sup>163</sup> He remarks that ‘in comparison with other Mediaeval lives’, Voragine’s life of Jerome ‘was remarkably careful’, and his accuracy in ‘simply recounting where Jerome went, what he did and with whom he worked with was remarkably high’.<sup>164</sup> Collins likewise points out Voragine’s ‘critical’ use of sources as well as his earnest care for accurately recounting the details of Jerome’s life.<sup>165</sup> From his comparison of Voragine’s life of Jerome with Erasmus’ *Life*, he concludes: ‘we can thus identify in Jacobus a drive for critical accuracy that he [shared] with Erasmus and others of a yet more critical and better-equipped generation of scholars.’<sup>166</sup> From my own look at the *Legenda Aurea*’s life of Jerome, on the whole I find Collins’ analysis just. To pursue but one element of his analysis, Voragine made a noteworthy effort to cite sources for his evidence.<sup>167</sup> After quickly tracing out Jerome’s early education, the *Legenda Aurea* brought up Jerome’s *Somnium* and remarked that Jerome had recounted it in his letter to Eustochium, *Audi filia*.<sup>168</sup> Shortly thereafter Voragine cited *Audi filia* at length in order to describe Jerome’s austerities in the Syrian desert. Later Jacob stated that whereas Jerome lived out fifty-five years and six months of ‘holy purpose’ and of virginity, he had lost the latter in his youth, citing for his evidence Jerome’s letter to Pammachium beginning *Quod ad te hucusque*, in which the saint wrote: ‘I praise virginity to the skies not because I have it, but because I admire more greatly what I do not have.’<sup>169</sup> Later in this work Voragine cited two of Augustine’s works in order to show the great affection and respect that Augustine came to have for Jerome after the

<sup>163</sup> Collins, ‘A Life Reconstituted’, 34.

<sup>164</sup> Collins, ‘A Life Reconstituted’, 39.

<sup>165</sup> Collins, ‘A Life Reconstituted’, 38-39.

<sup>166</sup> Collins, ‘A Life Reconstituted’, 39.

<sup>167</sup> Voragine’s knowledge of Patristic and of Classical sources, moreover, is clear in his life of Jerome as well as in his history of the city of Genoa. See Stefania Bertini Guidetti’s article, ‘Fonti e tecniche di compilazione nelle *Chronica Civitatis lanuensis* di Iacopo da Varagine’, in *Gli umanesimi medievali*, ed. Claudio Leonardi (Firenze: SISMEL, 1998), 17-36.

<sup>168</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 33r: Quodam vero tempore, sicut ipse in epistola ad Eustochium perhibet, dum de die Tullium et nocte Platonem avidè legeret eo quod sermo incultus sibi in libris prophetis non placeret, circa mediam quadragesimam tam subita febre corripitur ut toto frigescente iam corpore vitalis calor in solo pectore palpitaret. Dum ergo exequiae funeris pararentur, subito ad tribunal iudicis trahitur et interrogatus cuius conditionis esset Christianum se esse libere profitetur.

<sup>169</sup> Jerome, Letter 49, 20: Virginitatem in celo prefero, non quia habeo, sed quia magis miror quod non habeo.

sparring that marked the beginning of their correspondence.<sup>170</sup> The last paragraphs of the *Legenda Aurea* are filled with citations taken from ‘trustworthy’ contemporary sources, some of which Erasmus also cited in his *Life*. Voragine cited Prosperus and Isidorus in order to show Jerome’s lasting importance to Christian scholars;<sup>171</sup> Sigibertus in order to show Jerome’s re-organization of the Psalter;<sup>172</sup> and Severus Sulpicius in order to show Jerome’s unmatched learning and the hatred that heretics bore him for such learning and for the power it gave his arguments.<sup>173</sup> Bietenholz has remarked that Voragine ‘knew very well that some sources were more authentic than others. Quite properly he tended to assume that the oldest ones...were the best’.<sup>174</sup> He did this centuries before Erasmus’ birth.

The so-called ‘first generation’ of Italian humanists came into its own almost a century after Voragine’s death in 1298. In his books on Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder’s orations in honour of Jerome, at least three of which Vergerio actually delivered in the flesh,<sup>175</sup> John McManamon makes a convincing case that these orations foreshadowed many ideas and rhetorical goals found in Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome*. McManamon believes that the

<sup>170</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 34r: In quanta reverentia Augustinus eum habuerit patet in epistolis quas sibi misit. In una quarum ei tali modo scribit: ‘Domino dilectissimo et cultu sincerissimo caritatis observando atque amplectendo Hieronymo Augustinus etc.’ Alibi quoque de eo scribit: ‘Sanctus Hieronymus presbiter graeco, latino et hebraeo eloquio eruditus in locis sanctis atque in litteris sacris usque ad decrepitam vixit aetatem, cuius nobis aeloquii ab oriente in occidentem instar solis lampas resplenduit.’

<sup>171</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 34r: Beatus autem Prosper in suis Chronicis de eo sic ait: ‘Hieronymus praesbyter in Betlehem totus iam mundo clarus habitabat egregio ingenio et studio universae ecclesiae serviens’...Isidorus vero in libro Etymologiarum ait: ‘Hieronymus trium linguarum peritus extitit, cuius interpretatio caeteris antefertur quoniam et verborum tenacior est et perspicuitate sententiae clarior atque utpote a Christiano interprete verior’...

<sup>172</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 34r: Hieronymus igitur psalterium per ferias distinxit et unicuique ferie nocturnum proprium assignavit ac ‘Gloria Patri’ in fine cuiuslibet psalmi dicendum instituit, ut ait Sigibertus. Deinde epistolas et Evangelia per anni circulum decantandas ceteraque ad officium pertinentia post cantum rationabiliter ordinavit.

<sup>173</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 34r: In dialogo quoque Severi discipuli sancti Martini qui eius tempore fuit, sic de Hieronymo scriptum habetur: ‘Hieronymus praeter fidei meritum dotemque virtutum non solum latinis atque graecis, sed etiam hebraeis ita litteris instructus est ut se illi in omni scientia nemo audeat comparare, cui iugis adversus malos pugna perpetuumque certamen. Oderunt eum haeretici quia eos impugnare non desinit, oderunt clerici quia vitam eorum insectatur et crimina, sed plane eum boni omnes et mirantur et diligunt. Nam qui eum haeticum esse arbitrantur insaniunt. Totus semper in lectione, totus in libris est, non die, non nocte requiescit, aut legit aliquid semper aut scribit.’ Haec Severus.

<sup>174</sup> Peter Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula* (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1994), 84.

<sup>175</sup> John M. McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: The Humanist as Orator*, 121.



*Life*, ‘admittedly a more subtle piece of historical interpretation’, nonetheless ‘mirrored the reformist tone of Vergerio’s panegyric’. We do not have to accept all of McManamon’s arguments in order to see that Vergerio was able to appraise the life of Jerome ‘critically’.<sup>176</sup> Erasmus was aware of these orations since they were included in the edition of Jerome’s letters published by Conrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz at Rome in 1468. We shall see below that Erasmus and the Froben editors used this or the same printers’ 1470 edition of Jerome’s letters in order to put together the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>177</sup>

The Florentine humanist Giannozzo Manetti (1396-1459) – businessman, classicist, author of the well-known *Oratio de dignitate hominis* (*Oration on the Dignity of Man*) and a scholar of the Bible wishing to read and to understand its original Greek and Hebrew – included a life of Jerome in his unpublished work *De illustribus longevis* (*Of Famous Men who Lived to a Great Age*). Tobias Leuker has concluded that this life must also be considered an example of ‘critical history’ if we accept how Ferguson, Rice and those repeating their arguments have defined it.<sup>178</sup> From his detailed research, Leuker proves that Manetti came to many conclusions about Jerome’s life whose discovery Rice and Pabel first attribute to Erasmus’ *Life* (e.g. that Jerome had made two journeys between the Holy Land and Rome).<sup>179</sup> He also shows that Erasmus’ *Life* and Manetti’s *De illustribus longevis* differed only on three major points: about whether or not Jerome had truly re-worked the Roman Psalter, whether Jerome was first ordained a priest in Rome or in Antioch and

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<sup>176</sup> John M. McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome*, 120.

<sup>177</sup> See Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 124: ‘The printed sources Erasmus used to establish his text were the folio volumes issued by Sweinheim and Pannartz [1468, 1470], Peter Schöffer [1470], Nicholas Kessler (Basel, 1492 and 1497) and Jacobus Saccon (Lyons, 1508). His manuscript sources are unknown, though his letters make clear that he had been collating manuscripts and collecting variants for some years, most actively while he was in Cambridge. The Froben editors used this edition in order to work out their own text.’

<sup>178</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 137-138.

<sup>179</sup> To see Leuker’s convincing disproving of Rice’s arguments in *Saint Jerome and the Renaissance*, see Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 119-131. See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 207. Pabel repeats Rice’s argument that Erasmus was the first to notice that Jerome journeyed to Syria twice.

whether or not Jerome had truly undertaken meaningful and long-lasting studies with Gregorius Nazianzenus.<sup>180</sup> Leuker also shows that both Manetti and the Abbot of Sponheim, Johannes Trithemius, made a point of spurning the widespread image of Jerome as a cardinal. Indeed, Manetti criticized this image more strongly than Erasmus ever did in the *Life*: ‘Following the mistake of the vulgar, new painters of our time are not ashamed to paint him as a cardinal with a red *galero*.’<sup>181</sup> For Manetti, this image was ‘surely false, because the singular rank of cardinals was established much later in the Catholic and the militant Church of God’.<sup>182</sup> This statement is perhaps more forceful than Erasmus’ judgement in the *Life*, for Erasmus wrote only that it seemed very unlikely to him that Jerome was a cardinal, much less one having the rank of cardinal as it was understood in his own day.<sup>183</sup> Leuker is right to point out that when Erasmus and Manetti wrote against the idea of Jerome as a cardinal, they both used more or less the same arguments, and their syntax and wording are remarkably alike.<sup>184</sup> It should also be noted that earlier lives brought up Jerome’s ordination as a *cardinalis presbyter* without specifying anything more. In doing so these earlier lives were likely reflecting the eighth-century understanding of the term *cardinalis presbyter*: any Roman priest with this title had the right to serve not only in his parish, but also in Rome’s

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<sup>180</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 132.

<sup>181</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 121. Manetti, *De illustribus longevis* (Vat. Pal. Lat. 1605) cited in Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 128: Quem [90r] vulgi errorem novi nostri temporis pictores secuti ipsum more cardinalium cum galero rubeo pingere non erubescunt.

<sup>182</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 128: Id ex eo falsum esse convincitur, quod haec singularis cardinalium dignitas multo post tempore in catholica ac militante Dei ecclesia instituta est.

<sup>183</sup> VH 586-591: Caeterum quod addunt presbyterum cardinalem ordinatum, ut cum omnium pace dixerim, mihi sane commenticium videtur, cum illis temporibus ne nomen quidem cardinalis rear auditum fuisse. Tantum abest ut is fuerit cardinalium splendor ac dignitas, quam hodie cernimus. Ipse Hieronymus presbyteri cognomen multis locis agnoscit, cardinalis nusquam. Erasmus mentioned the *galero* in the *Apotheosis Capnionis*, in which he celebrated Johannes Reuchlin. For the Latin text see ASD I-3, page 270, lines 213-214.

<sup>184</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 135-136: An eindeutigen textuellen Entsprechungen zwischen beiden Biographien mangelt es, doch weisen ihre ‘Kardinals-passagen’ durchaus Ähnlichkeiten auf. Manetti schreibt: Hunc itaque tantum ac tam sanctum virum imperiti vultu cardinalem fuisse dicunt...Id ex eo falsum esse convincitur, quod haec singularis cardinalium dignitas multo post tempore in catholica ac militante Dei ecclesia instituta est. Bei Erasmus liest man: Caeterum quod addunt presbyterum cardinalem ordinatum, ut cum omnium pace dixerim, mihi sane commenticium videtur, cum illis temporibus ne nomen quidem cardinalis rear auditum fuisse. Tantum abest ut is fuerit cardinalium splendor ac dignitas, quam hodie cernimus. Ipse Hieronymus presbyteri cognomen multis locis agnoscit, cardinalis nusquam. Das Gegenargument Manettis ist dasselbe wie bei Erasmus, und die markierten Syntagmen stimmen strukturell und zum Teil auch wörtlich miteinander überein.

four great churches – Saint Peter’s, Saint John Lateran, Saint Mary Major and Saint Paul outside the Walls.<sup>185</sup> Written before Innocent IV (c.1195-1243-1245)<sup>186</sup> granted the distinctive *galero* to all secular cardinals at the First Synod of Lyons in 1245, these lives did not help to give rise to the image of Jerome as a scarlet-clad cardinal as he was later portrayed in Mediaeval and in Renaissance artwork.<sup>187</sup> Erasmus did not reject categorically the possibility that Jerome was a ‘cardinal’ of some kind, which only Manetti did. As for Jerome’s miracles, Manetti, like Erasmus, acknowledged that miracles had been attributed to Jerome after his death, but Manetti did not vouch for their truthfulness.<sup>188</sup> Although Manetti’s *De illustribus longevis* was never printed, we might assume that his ideas about Jerome’s were known to many in Manetti’s circle of humanist friends, which included men such as Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni, Francesco Filelfo, Niccolò Niccoli, Lorenzo Valla and possibly Laudivio Zacchia, since Valla and Zacchia served the King of Naples Alfonso I (1396-1442-1458) in overlapping years.<sup>189</sup> It is also possible that Erasmus had seen a copy of Manetti’s *De illustribus longevis* at the Vatican Library during his stay at Rome from 1508-1509.<sup>190</sup> Like Erasmus, Manetti was moved in part to write Jerome’s life by his great admiration for the saint and for his works, ‘indispensable to the salvation of the human race’.<sup>191</sup>

We see similar concern about the historical truth of Jerome’s life in the incunabular as well as in the manuscript texts of other fifteenth-century Italian humanists. One of these was

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<sup>185</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 111-112. See Rice’s discussion of the *cardinalis presbyter* in *Saint Jerome*, 35.

<sup>186</sup> This system of notation indicates that Pope Innocent IV was born in 1195, died in 1245 and reigned as Pope from 1243-1245. For Popes and secular rulers I have adopted this system of notation throughout this thesis.

<sup>187</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 65.

<sup>188</sup> Manetti, cited in Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 128: Quo facto, cum antea assiduis febribus diutius vexaretur, mox expiravit. Post mortem suam, ut veneranda beatissimi viri sanctitas humano generi apertius innotesceret, multa et quidem magna miracula divinitus apparuisse ferunt.

<sup>189</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 103.

<sup>190</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine Kritische’, 136-137.

<sup>191</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 95. Rice cites Alfonso de Petris’ edition of Manetti’s *Apologeticus* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1981).

Laudivio Zacchia (c.1435-1475?), a Ligurian nobleman and student of Guarino of Verona (1374-1460), the well-known humanist whose other pupils included Aldus Manutius.<sup>192</sup> Over the course of an eventful career, Zacchia served as Papal secretary and wrote the wildly popular *Epistolae Magni Turci* (*Letters of the Great Turk*). It is also very likely that he was Lorenzo Valla's acquaintance at the court of Alfonso I in Naples.<sup>193</sup> Zacchia wrote a *Vita Beati Hieronymi* (*Life of Saint Jerome*) that first appeared in print in Naples in 1473.<sup>194</sup> Soon afterwards John Gersberg published Zacchia's *Life of Saint Jerome* at Rome in 1475,<sup>195</sup> and in the years to follow it went through at least three more Roman editions.<sup>196</sup> Rice brought up Zacchia's life in passing, but it is otherwise overlooked in secondary literature, despite its inclusion in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*.<sup>197</sup> Zacchia began his life by lamenting the poor quality of lives of Jerome then available to readers, and he promised better.<sup>198</sup> In chapter six of this thesis we shall see that this work was in many ways 'critical' according to the above definitions, sharing features, ideas and even wording with Erasmus' *Life*.

Throughout this thesis we shall often see the name of Giovanni Andrea Bussi, bishop of Aleria (1417-1475), the first director of the Vatican Library under Pope Sixtus IV (1414-

<sup>192</sup> For more on Guarino's reverence for Jerome, see Peter Bietenholz, 'Kult des Heiligen Hieronymus', 205. Laudivius Zacchia's age and the dates of his birth and death remain uncertain. See Laudivius Zacchia: *Erdichter der Epistolae Magni Turci*, in *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften-Philosophisch-Historische Klasse* 60 (1960): 3-42.

<sup>193</sup> Babinger, 'Laudivius Zacchia', 18.

<sup>194</sup> The *Epistolae Magni Turci* was a great success. See Babinger, 'Laudivius Zacchia', 24-25: Insgesamt liegen von den *Epistolae magni Turci* nicht weniger als 21 Wiegendrucke vor, von deren Herstellungsorten lediglich zwei nicht einwandfrei ermittelt wurden...Legt man für sie alle die in Italien übliche Auflagenziffer von etwa 300 Abdrucken zugrunde, so ergibt sich eine ungefähre Gesamtzahl von weit über 6000 Stücken, ein für damalige Zeiten erstaunlicher Umsatz innerhalb eines Vierteljahrhunderts.

<sup>195</sup> Leuker, 'Eine Kritische', 118.

<sup>196</sup> For more on Zacchia's life see Babinger, 'Laudivius Zacchia', 3-42. For more on the printing history of this life of Jerome see Babinger, 'Laudivius Zacchia', 22-23.

<sup>197</sup> Rice treats Zacchia quickly in *Saint Jerome*, 102-104, concluding on page 104: Laudivio had no notion of what a critical biography might be and not a clue to the method one would have to use to write one. But like the panegyrics humanist orators delivered on 30 September in Italian churches, monasteries, academic gatherings, princely courts or public squares, his life was a warm, enthusiastic account, very different in style, tone and emphasis (Laudivio and the orators gave only muted attention to Jerome's miracles) from anything written about the saint before 1400, a lively portrait of an orator, teacher, scholar, man of letters and controversialist as well as a hermit, monk and ascetic.

<sup>198</sup> 1495 Zacchia, page marked 'a ii', r. We shall be looking at the Latin text in chapter 6 of this thesis.

1471-1484) and editor of two of the first editions of Jerome's letters printed by Conrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz at Rome in 1468 and again in 1470. Bussi's forewords to these two editions, both dedicated to the reigning Pope Paul II (1417-1464-1471) and now available in an excellent modern critical edition,<sup>199</sup> included arguments that Erasmus repeated in his *Life* and in the 1516 *Jerome Edition*. For example, Bussi claimed that owing to scribes' carelessness, Jerome's letters had been 'corrupted to such a point that they could in no way be understood'.<sup>200</sup> Erasmus repeated this argument over forty years later in the 1516 *Jerome Edition*'s dedicatory letter addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury William Warham.<sup>201</sup> Bussi's editions laid the groundwork for all later editions of Jerome's letters, including the 1516 *Edition*.<sup>202</sup> In his introductory letter to the second volume of the 1468 Sweynheim and Pannartz edition, Bussi criticized Giovanni Andrea (c.1270-1348), a famous Bolognian canon-lawyer and author of the widely popular treatment of Jerome's life and works, the *Hieronymianus*, for 'most unhappily' spreading untruths, or 'poppcock' (*nugalia*), about Jerome - although Bussi did acknowledge Giovanni Andrea's great stature as a canon-lawyer.<sup>203</sup> Bussi's commitment to sticking to the 'facts' of Jerome's life is clear when he shrank from praising 'the glory of the immortal doctor' in his foreword. Instead, he encouraged readers to seek out Jerome's true greatness in his writings, whose 'richness and

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<sup>199</sup> *Prefazioni alle edizioni di Sweynheim e Pannartz, prototipografi romani*, ed. Massimo Miglio (Milan: Il polifilo, 1978). Hereafter this edition will be cited as *Prefazioni*.

<sup>200</sup> See *Prefazioni*, 3: ...satis visum est si in recognitione librorum, qui quidem imperitorum incuria depravati usque adeo erant, ut intelligi nullo modo posse viderentur, adhibito labore, mendas si non valerem omnes aliquas certe tollerem et, amicorum consilio, si qua vertenda essent efficerem Latina, si nimis obsoleta, ad usum nostrum sermonemque redigerem

<sup>201</sup> See Allen 396, 143-144: Quod superest non depravatum erat, sed prorsus extinctum et oblitteratum...

<sup>202</sup> For more about the importance of the 1468 Sweynheim and Pannartz edition, see Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 155.

<sup>203</sup> *Prefazioni*, 8: Divum ipsum Hieronymum sciebam quibusdam in locis scriptorum suorum veluti novum lustrum facere; nonnullos item praestantis auctoritatis viros inque suis facultatibus sapientiae et famae singularis, inter quos est pontificii iuris decus egregium Iohannes Andreae Bononiensis, qui veneratione atque admiratione multa divum Hieronymum suspiciens et prosequens, aegerrime ferebat illota (ne nugalia dixerim) quaedam tanto doctori tribui, quae ex illius officina nequaquam prodierunt a mediocriter etiam studiis, vel primis labris imbutis possent iudicari; ex quo etiam ut de Homero Aristarchus, de nostro Plauto M. Varro, de multis item plerique, ita ipse in scriptis suis fecit de Hieronymo; quae hoc loco ideo commemoranda tantum non etiam explicanda putavi, ne nimium me crassa et praecipiti emendationis Minerva usum quispiam arguendum existimaret.

wisdom are a much richer and worthier vessel' and 'more apt for the healing of the soul'.<sup>204</sup> According to Bussi, 'he who wishes to read another when he could read Jerome spurns choice delicacies in order to fill his stomach with cheap fodder'.<sup>205</sup> Bussi's two forewords to the Sweynheim and Pannartz editions of Jerome's letters encouraged readers to go back to the original sources for factual as well as for spiritual truth.

Giovanni Andrea's *Hieronymianus* also showed unmistakable evidence of a 'critical' desire to get back to early Christian sources in order to understand Jerome and his greatness.<sup>206</sup> Contemporaries called Andrea the 'fountain and trumpet of canon law' (*iuris canonici fons et tuba*), and he served as a professor of law at the University of Bologna and as a Papal functionary at Avignon. Andrea was also an acquaintance of Petrarch,<sup>207</sup> with whom he exchanged letters about the proper place of Jerome in Christian devotion.<sup>208</sup> Andrea wrote the *Hieronymianus* between 1337 and 1346, and for him this undertaking was truly a labour of love. Erasmus mentioned Andrea when discussing Paul's ideas about marriage and about the possibility of divorce in his commentaries for the 1519 Froben *New Testament*. Erasmus cited Andrea's opinion and acknowledged him to be a man 'most respected among lawyers'.<sup>209</sup> Andrea's *Hieronymianus* probably did more than any other work to spread the

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<sup>204</sup> *Prefazioni*, 9: Forsitan quispiam expectet uti de immortalis doctoris aliquid hoc loco gloria praedicemus. Voluntate id quidem conari nos possemus, non autem facultate. Ipse de se lectus ubertim dicet, cuius facundiae et sapientiae crater quanto crebrior et meratior fuerit tanto pronior erit ad animi salutem.

<sup>205</sup> *Prefazioni*, 9: Qui alium, praesente Hieronymo, quaerit legere, cibario pane, relictis esculentorum deliciis, cupit impleri.

<sup>206</sup> See Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 71.

<sup>207</sup> See Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 64.

<sup>208</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 61-62; 67. See Petrarch's *Familiars* II, 9 and *Familiars* IV, 15; 16.

<sup>209</sup> See the 1519 Froben *New Testament*, 327 (annotation on Corinthians 1): Liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat.) Nec prorsus abnuunt, quin aliqua ratione possit, si non abrogando quod statuit Christus, certe vel interpretando, vel astringendo, vel relaxando, quod non veritus est Paulus quoties ait, Ego non dominus, secundum indulgentiam agens non ex imperio. Porro quod ad matrimonium attinet, Ioannes Andraea gravis apud lureconsultos autor, asseverat Rhomanum pontificem posse constituere, ut per secundum matrimonium irritaretur prius, non consummatum, sicut irritatur per ingressum religionis. Et in huius sententiam pedibus discedit Panormitanus, quod licet ex horum commentariis in capitulum, quod votum, titulo de voto et voti redemptione, libro sexto.

image of Jerome as a *galero*-wearing, scarlet-clad cardinal in contemporary plastic arts.<sup>210</sup> Notwithstanding his inclusion of many doubtful tales about Jerome in his *Hieronymianus*, when making statements about Jerome's life Andrea was often very careful about citing evidence, much of which came from ancient sources.<sup>211</sup> In the *Hieronymianus* Andrea also included a thorough compilation of various sources about the exact year of Jerome's death, even if his own interpretation of this evidence was not correct.<sup>212</sup> When it came to determining the year of Jerome's death, Erasmus was also mistaken.<sup>213</sup> Even though the *Hieronymianus* included and spread many stories about Jerome's miracles, its author was also clearly not willing to accept as true everything that he included in his compilation. In the conclusion to his *Hieronymianus*, Andrea tried to justify this work to his readers so that he be 'armoured with a shield' against the 'detractors of this work's make-believe and faults'. In this justification Andrea admitted that many stories in his *Hieronymianus* were not necessarily true, but he proposed that they be read in such a way that, 'with the husk of exterior falsehood thrown off', readers 'find inside the kernel of hidden truth and through this secret attain to a higher understanding'.<sup>214</sup> We see Andrea's concern for truth again when he

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<sup>210</sup> See Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 71. Russo seconds Joseph Klapper's opinion in his article, 'Aus der Frühzeit des Humanismus. Dichtungen zu Ehren des heiligen Hieronymus', in *Bausteine, Festschrift für Max Koch*, eds. Ernst Boehlich and Hans Heckel (Breslau: Preuß and Jünger, 1926), 280.

<sup>211</sup> For one example of this, see his introduction to the fourth part of his 1514 *Hieronymianus*, ff. 56-57.

<sup>212</sup> Leuker, 'Eine Kritische', 130.

<sup>213</sup> Manetti, using some of the same evidence that we find in the *Hieronymianus*, more responsibly admitted that he could not be sure of the exact date of Jerome's death given that 'there are varied opinions of most learned men about the year of Jerome's death'. See Manetti in Leuker, 'Eine Kritische', 128: Sub Honorio vero Augusto vel non vel quinto vel potius primo supra nonagesimum aetatis suae annum (ut sunt varie doctissimorum hominum de eius morte sententiae) gloriosissime in Bethleem Iudeae oppido defunctus est atque iuxta praesepe nativitatis dominicae, ut ipse moriens mandaverat, sepultus.

<sup>214</sup> 1514 *Hieronymianus*, f. 186r/v: Cum adhuc clipeo loricatus, si ob huius operis fabricam et defectus per ipsius detractores livoris aculeo evocer ad tribunal, testatione praemissa, quam tenuis humane rationis igniculus ac ingenii et intellectus esuries nequeunt quid perfectum attingere, dabo cum vocis moderatione responsum. Quod si figmenta quae artis poetice depinxit industria, licet sine palliationis remedio nudam prostituunt falsitatem, detractores ipsi una cum universo recipiunt, eo quod per exemplorum imagines sigillant homines animos inincude morigerationis honeste nec notant quod in litterae superficie falsum resonet poetica fictio. Ex quo exterioris falsitatis abiecto putamine nucleum secretae veritatis intus inveniunt, et per id secretum altioris intelligentiae consequuntur. Eo fortius structuram hanc debent amplecti. In qua de glorioso Hieronymi littera et sensus simul considerate conveniunt, ut mores informent, vitia extirpent, virtutes inferant, sensualitatem rationi subiiciant, devotionem augeant, et ex his salutem propinent aeternam, quam sola ratio prioris vitae promittit.

confessed that he had been moved to write his *Hieronymianus* not for the love of glory, but so that he might further the ‘veneration of the glorious doctor’, over which a cloud of silence had stolen, by bringing Jerome into ‘perpetual light’ through the ‘form of true narrative’.<sup>215</sup> This late Mediaeval European scholar whom many historians today might label a ‘miracle-monger’ clearly understood that many of the stories related in his *Hieronymianus* were doubtful.<sup>216</sup> In his example we also see that many fourteenth-century readers, Andrea’s detractors (*detractores*), were anything but ready to swallow any and every tale about Jerome.

Closer to Erasmus’ home and times, in the foreword to his 1494 edition of John Trithemius’ *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* (On Church Writers), Johannes Amerbach explained that owing to the confused state of saints’ lives in his day, ‘I found that no work better suited to our times had come into my hands, which work, because it was most pleasing to me and to all lovers of letters and of truth, I deemed all the more necessary’.<sup>217</sup> Although I shall not analyze this text in detail, Trithemius himself often expressed principles that we might easily label ‘critical’. In his conclusion to this work he wrote: ‘I have not written anything that I did not find corroborated in many places and testimonies. And truly as I professed at the beginning of this work, I should gladly admit to any good-willed corrector’s

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<sup>215</sup> 1514 *Hieronymianus*, ff. 185v-186r: Cum ipso tamen attestor quod inanis gloriae vel superbiea tumor intus aestuans ut exiret in publicum me huius operis non coegit ad fabricam, nec popularis favoris applausus me invitavit ad operam. Cuius ventositatis funesta contagio saepe cogit tumose defendere eum quem super se insollerter extollit. Sed solum hec pinxi, ut iuxta supra descripta in primae partis extremis, venerationem gloriosi doctoris Hieronymi, quam taciturnitatis nubis obduxerat patenscendo per verae narrationis formam perpetuam monetarem in lucem, a tenacis memoriae damno notitiae posterorum affigerem et hoc supernae maiestatis dextera dexteram meam dirigente, sine qua fragilis calami tenuitas nil posset figurare suave.

<sup>216</sup> This is also clear in the life of Jerome with which Andrea began the *Hieronymianus*’ second part, in which he compiled many ‘legends’ (*legenda*) about Jerome. See 1514 *Hieronymianus*, ff. 19r-25r.

<sup>217</sup> Introductory letter to 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*: Quo diligenter perspecto et examinato, non reperi ullum opus oportunius his nimiris temporibus manus meas incidere potuisse, quod mihi acceptius et cunctis litterarum ac veritatis amatoribus utilius magisque necessarium existimaverim.



opinion that truth has made solid and that charity has made pure.’<sup>218</sup> Trithemius, Erasmus and many biographers and hagiographers before them were in part moved to act because they were not happy about the prior tradition of transmitting the saints’ life and letters and because they wanted to know and to make known the ‘truth’ about them. The above evidence, and many more examples in manuscripts and in early printed texts strewn throughout Europe and the great libraries of North America, show that biographers and editors of Jerome before Erasmus also cared deeply about historical truth. It should not surprise us that many prior lives of Jerome included ‘miraculous’ stories, nor that many writers concerned with historical truth accepted and put into their lives stories found neither in Jerome’s writings nor in those of his contemporaries. After all, many important Catholic beliefs – including the idea of Mary’s Immaculate Conception, to which Erasmus showed sympathy but which became official dogma under the reign of Pius IX only in 1854 – have no clear basis in Holy Writ.<sup>219</sup> ‘Critical history’ was not the invention of humanists wanting to be modern and waiting with baited breath for the chance to break free from the blinkered bonds of Mediaeval and Papal superstition. Instead, we have seen above that many of Jerome’s biographers from late Antiquity up to the sixteenth-century cared about the ‘facts’ of Jerome’s life and sought them out in ‘trustworthy’ sources dating from the fourth and fifth centuries.

Erasmus was not the only Dutchman to write a life of Jerome in the 1510s. His fellow monk from Steyn, Cornelius Aurelius – to whom Erasmus described his studies and praised Classical, Patristic and contemporary humanist writers in many of his earliest preserved

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<sup>218</sup> 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, 140v: Neque nos aliquid scripsimus, quod non multis locis vel testimoniis fuerit comprobatum. Verum sicut in principio huius operis professi sumus, libenter cedimus opinioni cuiuscumque benivoli correctoris, quam et veritas solidam et charitas reddiderit sinceram.

<sup>219</sup> See John O’Malley’s introduction to CWE 69, xxxv. Erasmus himself, even though he did not deny the dogma, confessed that he could find no clear evidence in the Bible that surely upheld the dogma of the Trinity. See Joseph Levine, ‘Erasmus and the Problem of the Johannine Comma’, in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997): 573.

letters<sup>220</sup> – wrote a life of Jerome about 1516. In that year Alardus of Amsterdam finished a letter to Erasmus by asking him to help see Cornelius’ life of Jerome into publication.<sup>221</sup> We do not know what Erasmus’ answer to this letter was, if there was one, but Cornelius’ life of Jerome, whose manuscript can be found today at Deventer’s *Athenaeumbibliotheek* (SAB), remained unpublished. This work of over seventy manuscript pages is an impressive scholarly effort and deserves closer analysis.<sup>222</sup> Another Dutch churchman, Christian Maseeuw, wrote an unpublished life of Jerome in 1512, which Charles de Clercq has called ‘the first modern, somewhat critical biography of the saint’.<sup>223</sup> Born about the same time as Erasmus, Maseeuw’s prologue to his life of Jerome put forward ideas as ‘critical’ as anything we see in Erasmus’ *Life*:

Writing a new life of saint Jerome I ought first to explain my reasons for taking up this work. Many men have written many things about this most holy man, but no one written his history in good order, either because they did not know this order because of the great number of his deeds or, if they knew it, they neglected to point out what is most befitting any historian; to wit, the place and time, where and when the things of which they write took place. Therefore even if they have written many things, they offer little certainty. Because now and then they seem to do this, such as when it is claimed that the young Jerome learned Hebrew at Rome, or that he was made a cardinal under Liberius, or that he later studied with Gregorius Nazianzenus. There are other similar examples, but we see easily that they are in error if we read our doctor’s own writings. So that we might have certain things instead of doubtful things, or rather, true things rather than false things, leaving aside the small streams we must drink instead of the very fountain and look for the truth of history in Jerome’s own books. And what he could not say of himself we shall take from the chronicles of Saint Prosper.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> See the letters they exchanged in Allen 17-30. See also Allen 37; 40; 78.

<sup>221</sup> Allen 443, 35-38: Non committas, oro, quin Cornelii tui labores in Hieronymum exantlatos, quanta maxima possis, iuves industria. Tyrocinia illa tua et Guilhelmi tui, praeceptoris olim nostri, tuos in usus domi nostrae diligenter servamus.

<sup>222</sup> The shelf-mark of this manuscript at the Athenaeum is 111 D 11 KL

<sup>223</sup> Charles De Clercq, ‘De seculiere Geestelijken, Mannelike en Vrouwelijke Religieuzen te Lande’, in *Flandria Nostra* 4 (1959): 108.

<sup>224</sup> Cited in De Clercq, ‘De Seculiere Geestelijken’, 108: Incipit prologus Christiani Massei in vitam beati Hieronymi. Novam de sancto Hieronymo scripturus historiam, debeo prius suscepti operis causas exponere. Multi de hoc beatissimo viro multa scripserunt, sed nemo secundum ordinem eius historiam prosecutus est, quod vel ignoraverint propter gestorum eius multitudinem, vel si norant neglexerint adnotare quod maxime decet historicum, locus et tempus, ubi et quando gesta sunt que scribebant. Unde factum est ut licet scripserunt plurima, minorem certitudinem praebeant. Quod et si quandoque facere videantur, ut est illud quod Romae puer Hebraicam linguam didicerit, quod sub Liberio factus sit cardinalis, quod postea Gregorium Nazanzenum audierit et cetera talia, errasse eos facile deprehenderimus si propria doctoris nostri scripta legerimus. Ut ergo certa pro dubiis, immo vera pro falsis habeamus, omissis rivulis ex ipso nobis fonte bibendum est, et ex suis ipsius libris veritas historiae requirenda. Illud autem quod de se ipse dicere non potuit beati Prosperi cronicis concedendum, quod obierit Theodosio novies et Constantio ter consulibus. Quos certum est anno Domini quadringentesimo vicesimo quinto fastis nomen dedisse. Sed et ilud presupponendum, quod ultra centesimum annum aetatis sue non vixerit. Quia scripsit Eustochio regulam in

That three Dutchmen undertook to write detailed lives of Jerome in the 1510s points to a widespread desire among learned churchmen in the land of Erasmus' birth for a life of Jerome which better reflected the historical truth of the saint's life. It seems likely that such a desire extended throughout Europe, especially when we see many of the same arguments put forward in the Croatian scholar Marcus Marulus' 1507 life of Jerome, whose manuscript is now at the British Library.<sup>225</sup> In this work Marulus also lamented that prior lives of Jerome often 'confuse the reader's mind rather than teach him' and promised to write his life by drawing mainly from contemporary sources.<sup>226</sup>

From the above evidence, we can conclude that Erasmus' *Life*, however outstanding, powerful and skilful, was not groundbreaking solely owing to its concern for truthfulness and for historical truth. To my knowledge, this idea, along with its underlying assumption that most biographers of Jerome and other saints before Erasmus did not care much, if at all, about their accounts' accuracy and truthfulness, has lived on and has not been seriously challenged in scholarly literature about the *Life* until the twenty-first century.<sup>227</sup> By highlighting what Ancient, Mediaeval and Renaissance scholarship shared, one of this thesis'

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qua dicit se propinquum iam morti cum praemisisset praescium futurorum. Quibus datis non tamen assertis, facile gestorum eius tempora colliguntur.

<sup>225</sup> See Darko Novakovic's critical text of this *Vita Divi Hieronymi* in *Colloquia Maruliana* 3 (1994): 26-66.

<sup>226</sup> Cited from Novakovic, '*Vita Divi Hieronymi*', 26: Legimus divi Hieronymi presbyteri vitam autore incerto. Quisquis tamen ille fuit, primo non satis narrandi ordinem tenuisse mihi videtur, cum pleraque ante dicantur postea dicenda, ita ut confundat potius legentis mentem quam instruat, deinde nonnulla memoratu digna omisisse, quae et sanctitatem hominis plenius indicare et nobis exemplo esse poterant. Quam ob rem illa eadem, suo in quo gesta sunt ordine, perscribere et alia quaedam, quae minime tacenda esse duxi, adiicere, decrevi, breviter quidem cuncta perstringens, praeter illa quae vel ipsum de se loqui continget vel aliorum testimoniis affirmare oportebit, hoc est Augustini, Eusebii, Cyrilli, Severique Sulpicii. Nihil intactum praetermittam quod de illo usquam legere potui, ne tantus ac talis vir sua laude (quantum in me est) fraudetur; non quod illi quicquam nostra addere possit laudatio (quem nemo satis digne laudavit) sed et eius acta quomodo possumus recensendo, tum ad amandum tum ad imitandum magis accendamus. Nemo me quod de illo scribere audeam, temeritatis accuset. Debet enim non tantum disertissimi cuiusque, verum et omnium ore praedicar, in quo nihil quod omnibus optandum sit desideratur. Sed iam quod proposuimus, narrare incipimus.

<sup>227</sup> In addition to Frazier's *Possible Lives*, for several example to the contrary see Cécile Caby, 'L'humanisme au service de l'observance: quelques pistes de recherches', in *Humanisme et Église*, 124.

foremost goals is to challenge this assumption and, more importantly, what it implies about the development of historical thought and about Erasmus' role in this development. We shall be looking more closely at what Erasmus' *Life* shared with prior lives of Jerome in this thesis' sixth chapter, but here we should note one important feature common to all the scholars whom we have treated in this chapter. In addition to their great admiration of the Jerome's holiness and example for Christians, they all shared a concern for documentary evidence and were therefore heirs to a Christian historiographical tradition dating from before Jerome's lifetime. Arnaldo Momigliano has pointed out that Eusebius of Caesarea, whose *Chronicle* Jerome translated into Latin, ushered in a kind of historical writing markedly different from most Classical histories, in which one usually finds 'a maximum of invented speeches and a minimum of authentic documents'.<sup>228</sup> For Momigliano, that the classically educated Eusebius chose 'to give plenty of documents and refrained from invented speeches' means that 'he must have intended to produce something different from ordinary history' as it was known to and accepted by learned contemporaries.<sup>229</sup> Momigliano concludes: 'Eusebius introduced a new type of historical exposition which was characterized by the importance attributed to the more remote past, by the central position of doctrinal controversies and by the lavish use of documents.'<sup>230</sup> Momigliano also remarks that 'from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, ecclesiastical history (especially of the early Church) was treated with a much greater display of erudition, with much more care for minute analysis of the evidence than any other type of history'.<sup>231</sup> Elsewhere Momigliano shows that Eusebius was widely read during the Middle Ages and that Mediaeval scholars took his historical methods and

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<sup>228</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.', in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century; Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 89.

<sup>229</sup> Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian Historiography', 90-91.

<sup>230</sup> Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian Historiography', 91.

<sup>231</sup> Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian Hagiography', 91-92.

writings for a model.<sup>232</sup> Therefore, at least two essential components of ‘critical history’ as we have seen it defined in the case of Erasmus’ *Life* – the emphasis on reliable and documented contemporary sources and the use of such sources in order to establish the ‘factual truth’ about an event or a person – were methods that Erasmus shared with biographers of Jerome and with Church historians stretching back to late Antiquity itself.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 146-147.

<sup>233</sup> Momigliano, *Classical Foundations*, 136-137.

## PART I: CHAPTER III

### ***INSTITUTIO DOCTORIS CHRISTIANI* – JEROME’S EARLY EDUCATION**

Erasmus began his *Life of Jerome* with a fiery plea for the need for truthfulness in history-writing, and especially in histories of the saints’ lives, setting out a standard for ‘trustworthy’ sources and promising readers a ‘faithful’ portrait of the saintly doctor. But we have seen and we shall see many examples in which Erasmus’ treatment of Jerome’s life and letters did not always live up to the tall order of ‘faithfulness’ set forward in his *Life*’s opening paragraphs, nor with what Jerome himself writes. That is not to say that Erasmus was not a talented historian, but rather that his *Life* fit into a traditional pattern inherited from prior lives of the saint. In many ways Erasmus did better this tradition by emphasizing factual accuracy and a more comprehensive treatment of Jerome’s life. When we look at Erasmus’ story of Jerome’s early life and education, for example, we see that he put together a plausible story from contemporary sources and used these sources skilfully in order to come to his conclusions.

With few sources at hand, Erasmus undertook to describe the young Jerome’s studies and upbringing. In telling this story Erasmus was most ‘faithful’ as Jerome’s biographer. We should, however, keep three things in mind about Erasmus’ account of Jerome’s early days. Firstly, although Erasmus’ use of contemporary sources was both careful and skilful, even in these relatively straightforward parts of the *Life*, he did allow himself what we might call ‘freedoms’ in history-writing. Second, in these pages Erasmus used ‘critical’ methods in order to downgrade Jerome’s humanist pedigree. Third, Erasmus repeated time and again, as

did many of Jerome's prior biographers, that Jerome's studies of the pagan Classics were the foundation of his future greatness as a Christian scholar. This was unmistakably this section's foremost rhetorical thrust.<sup>234</sup>

Erasmus first recounted that Jerome 'was born in 331 AD during the reign of Emperor Constantine in the town of Stridon. Stridon had once been located near the border of Dalmatia and Pannonia but was, according to Jerome's testimony in his *De viris illustribus*, destroyed in his lifetime by the rapacious Goths'.<sup>235</sup> Like almost all of Jerome's prior biographers, Erasmus quoted Jerome's *De viris illustribus* in order to describe his birthplace.<sup>236</sup> It is worth noting, however, that nowhere in the *De viris illustribus* or in the rest of Jerome's writings do we find a definite birthday for the saint. Erasmus had most likely, directly or indirectly through another life of Jerome, taken the year of Jerome's birth from the testimony of Prosper of Aquitaine, whose dating Megan Williams has called 'notoriously unreliable'.<sup>237</sup> Writing of Jerome's birthplace, Erasmus high-handedly wrote off the highly respected fifteenth-century humanist Flavio Biondo's (c.1392-1463) suggestion that ancient Stridon was located at the site of the contemporary town of Sdrigna, now in Croatia. Erasmus quipped that even if a few enterprising souls in this town had put up a metal epitaph claiming Jerome as their native son, such 'ambition and attitude is hardly worthy of serious people and indeed entirely unworthy of Christians. Let the man who makes a most careful study of the writings of Jerome and who then describes his life most accurately, let him by right, I say,

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<sup>234</sup> According to Russo, this idea was common to almost all lives of Jerome. See Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 21-22.

<sup>235</sup> VH 136-140: Natus est igitur vir eximius Hieronymus, anno ab orbe redempto trecentesimo trigesimo primo, sub Imperatore Constantino in oppido Stridonis, quod iam tum a Gothis omnia populantibus eversum fuisse, testis est ipse in Catalogo Scriptorum illustrium, olim Dalmatiae Pannoniaeque confinium.

<sup>236</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, chapter 135. See PL 23, 715 B: Hieronymus patre Eusebio natus, oppido Stridonis, quod a Gothis eversum, Dalmatae quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit, usque in praesentem annum, id est, Theodosii principis decimum quartum, haec scripsi. In his *Life* Erasmus echoed this vocabulary.

<sup>237</sup> For a good summary of the ongoing scholarly controversy surrounding Jerome's birthday, see Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 268-271.

claim Jerome as his own, even if his place of birth should be far beyond Britain'.<sup>238</sup> In rejecting Sdrigna as the site of ancient Stridon, Erasmus followed in the footsteps of Pierpaolo Vergerio.<sup>239</sup> Erasmus did not explain, however, the reasons for which Biondo's ideas were to be pushed aside with such scorn. Instead, he questioned Biondo's seriousness as a Christian and hinted that only men with knowledge of Jerome's writings, such as he, could claim Jerome as their true possession. In this passage Erasmus also gave his readers two outstanding details of Jerome's life – his birthday and his place of birth – without doing much more 'critical' work in order to prove when and where Jerome was born than the writer of *Plaerosque nimirum*, Jacobus de Voragine or many other biographers of Jerome before him. No less than Erasmus, all these biographers had read and cited Jerome's *De viris illustribus*.<sup>240</sup>

Although he did not cite the letter itself in the next paragraph, Erasmus clearly knew of Jerome's brother Paulinianus from the saint's letter beginning *Diu te Romae* addressed to his friend Rufinus, who later ranked among Jerome's bitterest enemies.<sup>241</sup> As for Jerome's sister, Erasmus recounted that Jerome 'is silent about her name'.<sup>242</sup> For evidence about her existence it is most likely that Erasmus had recourse to Jerome's letter to Julianus, *Antiquus*

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<sup>238</sup> VH 140-151: Id hodie nonnulli, quorum de numero Blondus est, idem esse volunt cum eo quod hac tempestate vulgus Sdrignam appellat, oppidulum in Histria, Italiae regione, situm inter Petram pilosam, Portulam, et Primontem, ut horum temporum utamur vocabulis. Addunt in huius rei fidem, ibidem ostendi monumentum Eusebii patris cum ephitaphio laminis insculpto, nimirum id agentes ut Hieronymum Italiae suae vindicent. Mihi studium et affectus istiusmodi parum dignus videtur gravibus viris, immo in totum Christianis. Qui in libris Hieronymianis erit diligentissime versatus, qui vitam Hieronymianam proxime exprimet, is sibi iure vindicet Hieronymum, etiam si porro ultra Britannos natus fuerit.

<sup>239</sup> John McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: the Humanist as Orator*.

<sup>240</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 33r: Hieronymus Eusebii viri nobilis filius ab oppido Stridonis quod Dalmatiae et Pannoniae confinia tenet extitit oriundus. The writer of *Plaerosque nimirum* likewise cites *De viris illustribus*. See *Plaerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 201: Plaerosque nimirum illustrium virorum non ambigo nosse, quo natus, quibusve eruditus sit litteris, quo denique quiescat sanctus Hieronymus loco. Verumtamen quibus non vacat, vel legere plurimum non valent, hoc si voluerint opus, compendiosa brevitate poterunt scire. Beatus igitur Hieronymus, nobili genere ortus, patre vero Eusebio nomine: oppido Stridonis, quod a Gothis eversum, Dalmatiae quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit.

<sup>241</sup> Jerome, Letter 81, 2.

<sup>242</sup> VH 152: Erat illi frater natus minor, nomine Paulinianus; nam sororis nomen tacuit.



*sermo est*, as well as his letter to Chromatius, Iovinus and Eusebius, *Non debet charta*. This straightforward and derivative first sentence of the *Life*'s second paragraph treating Jerome's early life is one of few which we can pass over without much comment. In the same paragraph's next sentence, Erasmus began already to apply more his own special tint to Jerome's life and times.

Erasmus remarked that Jerome had 'a maternal aunt Castorina, with whom some disagreement had occurred about a family matter, if I am not mistaken'.<sup>243</sup> Moving on from this family member who, according to Erasmus' *argumentum* to *Iohannes idem apostolus*, was only known to have existed from the title traditionally affixed to this letter,<sup>244</sup> Erasmus treated at greater length Jerome's father:

According to his own testimony his father was called Eusebius, a name derived from the Greek word for piety. This is not without significance for the future: it is very fitting that a hero of 'saintly name' (this is what Jerome means in Greek) be the offspring of a 'pious man'. The glory of that name, I submit, is worthy of a Christian, a name derived not from genealogies or from portrait busts of prominent ancestors, not from the destruction of towns or the annihilation of troops, but from a life spent in piety and holiness. He has nothing more to say about his father; he does not indicate whether he was a plebeian or a patrician, poor or rich, a magistrate or a private citizen. Some, however, falsely maintain that he was born of high nobility, and this to enable them to represent him as a city prefect. On the other hand it is reasonable to suppose that before the destruction of his native town he was of intermediate rank and moderate means. Jerome nowhere divulged his mother's name, although he does mention that both his parents were Christian.<sup>245</sup>

It is likely that in writing this passage Erasmus drew from the anonymous biography of Jerome beginning *Plerosque nimirum*. Disagree though he may with its author's claim that

<sup>243</sup> VH 153-154: Matertera Castorina, cum qua disidii nescio quid intercesserat, ob rem, ni fallor, familiarem; quam tamen humanissimis litteris ad concordiam invitat.

<sup>244</sup> From the 1516 *Edition* I, f. 95v: Ex ipsa epistola non liquet ad quam scripta sit. Titulus tamen indicat scriptam ad materteram Castorina, cum hac apparet Hieronymo fuisse dissidii nescio quid. Rogat igitur, ut tandem secum redeat in gratiam.

<sup>245</sup> VH 155-167: Patri nomen fuisse Eusebio, declarat ipse, quod Graecis a pietate dictum est, non absque praesagio; quod pulchre conveniat, ut ex pio nascatur ille sacri nominis heros: nam id sonat ἱερώνυμος. Atque ea demum est digna Christiano nominis gloria, quae non ex stemmatis aut imaginibus, non ex oppidis eversis aut concisis copiis, sed ex vita pie sancteque acta nascitur. Caeterum nihil addit, plebeiusne fuerit an patricius, tenuis an locuples, privatus an magistratus, cum hoc quidam affingant illum nobilissimis ortum parentibus, sed ut eadem opera potuerint illum urbis praefectum facere. Consentaneum est autem, ante dirutam patriam mediocri loco fortunaque fuisse. Matris nomine nusquam edidit; non tacens tamen se parente utroque Christiano genitum.

Jerome was ‘born into the nobility’,<sup>246</sup> Erasmus closely mirrored the reasoning and the sentence structure of *Plaerosque nimirum*, in which we read:

It is fitting that [Jerome] was born to a father named Eusebius. For Eusebius in Attic means ‘pious’. In Aeolian, Jerome means ‘holy law’. Justly then was Jerome, that is, the sacred law, born from a holy father: so that by his hard work the nourishing law might shine forth without blemish from the Hebrews’ writings, which announced to the human race that with his austerities put aside, the holy, saintly and merciful father was coming.<sup>247</sup>

Erasmus was most likely writing in answer to the treatments of Jerome’s name in *Plaerosque nimirum*<sup>248</sup> as well as in the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>249</sup> Erasmus corrected both of these works’ misinterpretations of Jerome’s name by having recourse to the Greek. In this he again followed in the footsteps of Vergerio, who also knew Greek and was therefore able correctly to explain the meaning of Jerome’s name.<sup>250</sup> Erasmus’ interpretation of the facts of Jerome’s life, however, was in this case not necessarily superior to what we find in *Plaerosque nimirum*. Right to point out that nowhere had Jerome indicated whether his father was ‘plebeian or a patrician, poor or rich, a magistrate or a private citizen’, Erasmus was no less guilty than Jerome’s other biographers in making something up based on a hunch when he wrote that ‘it is reasonable to suppose that before the destruction of his native town,

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<sup>246</sup> PL 22, 201: Beatus igitur Hieronymus, nobili genere ortus: patre vero Eusebio nomine...

<sup>247</sup> PL 22, 201: Congrue scilicet Eusebio generatus est patre. Eusebius namque Attice, Romane dicitur *pius*. Hieronymus quoque Aeolice, Latine omnino *sacra lex* intelligitur. Iure igitur Hieronymus, id est, sacra lex, de pio gignitur patre, ut studioso eius labore ex Hebraeorum scriptis absque scrupulositate, alma pateret lex, quae humano generi, sua austeritate remota, pium ac sacrum, misericordemque patrem nuntiaret venturum. The *Legenda Aurea*’s interpretation of Jerome’s name is different. See 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 33r: Hieronymus dicitur a hiera quod est sanctum et nemus, quasi sanctum nemus. Vel noma, quod est lex. Unde dicitur in legenda sua quam Hieronymus interpretatur sacra lex.

<sup>248</sup> PL 22, 201: Congrue scilicet Eusebio generatus est patre. Eusebius namque Attice, Romane dicitur *pius*. Hieronymus quoque Aeolice, Latine omnino *sacra lex* intelligitur.

<sup>249</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 33r: Hieronymus dicitur a hiera quod est sanctum et nemus, quasi sanctum nemus. Vel noma, quod est lex. Unde dicitur in legenda sua quam Hieronymus interpretatur sacra lex. Fuit enim sanctus, id est firmus vel mundus vel sanguine tinctus vel usui sacro deputatus. Sicut vasa templi dicebantur sancta quorum sacro usui deputata. Fuit enim sanctus, id est firmus in bono opere per perseverantiae longanimitatem, mundus in mente per puritatem, et sanguine tinctus per dominicae passionis meditationem. Sacro usui deputatus per scripturae sacrae expositionem et interpretationem. Dicitur et nemus a nemore ubi conversatus aliquando fuit. Et lex propoter regularem disciplinam quam monachos suos docuit, vel quia sacram legem exposuit et interpretatus fuit. Hieronymus etiam interpretatur visio pulchritudinis vel diiudicans locutiones. Est autem multiplex pulchritudo.

<sup>250</sup> McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome*, 16-17.

[Jerome's father] was of intermediate rank and moderate means'.<sup>251</sup> Given our scanty sources about Jerome's family, it is no less possible that Jerome's family, or at least some of it, was rich, powerful and noble, especially since he was known to have hob-nobbed with blue-blooded bucks such as Pammachius and Bonosus in these years, which Erasmus brought up in the pages to follow:

Among others he had these distinguished fellow students. There was Pammachius, of the noblest lineage, afterwards the son-in-law of Paula and the husband of Paulina, who after the latter's death took up a monastic way of life... There was Bonosus, also a man of the highest birth, who later became a monk. And there was Heliodorus, whose virtues brought him afterwards to the office of bishop.<sup>252</sup>

Megan Williams has concluded that Jerome's parents were 'provincial notables' who went out of their way to give their son the best late-Antique education money could buy. Testard has brought to our attention evidence suggesting that Jerome's family was well-to-do, quite possibly stemming from provincial nobility.<sup>253</sup> That Jerome was born to a father named Eusebius, to Christian parents<sup>254</sup> and that he was a cradle Catholic<sup>255</sup> are three things clear enough from Jerome's writings. Any more details about Jerome's parents, however, have little in the way of known textual backing and are, at best, the stuff of guesswork.

Erasmus indulged in such guesswork in the first sentence of his *Life*'s next paragraph, recounting that Jerome 'was carefully educated at home by his parents', where, 'in an atmosphere of parental love and domestic affection, together with Bonosus he drank in the

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<sup>251</sup> VH 164-165: Consentaneum est autem, ante dirutam patriam mediocri loco fortunaque fuisse.

<sup>252</sup> VH 248-255: Studiorum sodales inter caeteros hos praecipuos habuit: Pammachium summo natum loco, postea Paulae generum, Paulinae maritum, qui defuncta uxore monachi sumpsit institutum, tantae integritatis ut ad summi Pontificii fastigium flagitaretur, sed in illo, ut alibi scribit Hieronymus, pulchrius fuit, eam dignitatem promeruisse quam possedisse; Bonosum, et hunc summo genere, postea monachum; Heliodorum, quem deinde sua virtus ad episcopi functionem pertraxit.

<sup>253</sup> Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 16. See also Testard, *Saint Jérôme*, 12.

<sup>254</sup> See the *Praefatio sancti Hieronymi in librum Iob* in PL 28, 1082 B: Quanto magis ego Christianus, de parentibus Christianis natus, et vexillum crucis in mea fronte portans, cuius studium fuit omnia repetere, depravata corrigere, et sacramenta Ecclesiae puro ac fidei aperire sermone, vel a fastidiosis, vel a malignis lectoribus non debeo reprobari?

<sup>255</sup> Did Jerome coin this phrase? See Letter 82, 2: Nos nec Ecclesiam scindimus, neque a patrum communione dividimur: sed ab ipsis ut ita dicam, incunabulis catholico sumus lacte nutriti. Nemo namque magis Ecclesiasticus est, quam qui nunquam haereticus fuit.

knowledge of Christ from the very beginning'.<sup>256</sup> Jerome remarked in his letter to Rufinus, *Plus Deum tribuere*, that the noble Bonosus and he 'grew up together from tender childhood to flowering young age, such that same nurses' breasts and the same labourers' embraces caressed us and that when we went to those half-barbarian shores after our studies in Rome, we shared the same food and the same roof'.<sup>257</sup> The role of Jerome's parents in the saint's early education is hardly clear, however, and surely not clear enough such as to allow Erasmus to analyze the intentions of Jerome's parents as he did a few lines after the above passage. In this case it seems that Erasmus read his own ideas about good pedagogy and his admiration for Jerome into the scanty evidence found in Jerome's letters:

The wisest parents, it seems, understood that it was very important among whom and by whom a child was first taught. And what is best is never learned more successfully than in those callow years when minds are no less tenacious than malleable for any shape you may be fashioning. And so just as if they already understood at that time that this child of theirs had been born not for themselves but for the world at large, they saw to it that he was educated for the service of mankind and not for their own private concerns.<sup>258</sup>

Erasmus continued to praise the grammarians and rhetoricians with whom the young Jerome studied and by the rigour of whose teaching he was almost crushed. Noting that 'the former taught him to speak with exactness and clarity, the latter to speak with brilliance, dignity and wisdom', Erasmus put forward his opinion that 'it is to the instruction of these men that we owe the incomparable Doctor of the Church, not to the schools of the garrulous sophists'.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> VH 168-170: Ab his domi diligenter institutus, una cum Bonoso inter ipsos statim parentum amplexus et nutricum blanditas Christum imbibit.

<sup>257</sup> Jerome, Letter 3, 5: ut ego et ille a tenera pariter infantia ad florentem usque adoleverimus aetatem, ut idem nos nutricum sinus, idem amplexus foverint baiulorum et, cum post Romana studia ad Rheni semibarbaras ripas eodem cibo, pari frueremur hospitio, ut ego primus coeperim velle te colere.

<sup>258</sup> VH 181-188: Intellexisse videntur prudentissimi parentes, plurimum referre inter quos primum et a quibus instituaris. Quae sunt optima nunquam discuntur felicius quam rudibus illis annis, et non minus tenacibus, quicquid insculperis, quam in omnem sequacibus habitum. Itaque perinde quasi iam tum intelligerent sese puerum eum orbi communiter genuisse, non sibi, ita publicis utilitatibus, non suis privatis affectibus educandum curarunt.

<sup>259</sup> VH 190-196: Sentias enim nescio quid duriusculum et subacerbum in his qui serius se contulerunt ad discendas litteras. Proinde non abs re sibi gratulatur Hieronymus, quod a puero inter grammaticos et rhetores fuerit paene detritus: quorum alteri docuerunt emendate pureque loqui, alteri splendide, graviter et sapienter. Horum institutioni debemus incomparabilem Ecclesiae doctorem, non loquacium sophistarum scholis.

After praising pagan Classical learning and pedagogy at the expense of modern schoolmen, those ‘garrulous sophists’, Erasmus asked his readers:

Who would not have been aroused to the highest hope even then and have a presentiment of something extraordinary in this child? Such expectations would be natural from a consideration first of the character of his parents; then of the richness of his endowments – an abundant and ready talent, a fiery and untiring spirit; from a consideration too of Rome as his foster mother – a Rome, I believe, considerably less corrupt at that time than now; and finally of his distinguished teachers, Donatus in grammar, Victorinus in rhetoric.<sup>260</sup>

Laudivio Zacchia, whose fifteenth-century life of Jerome we shall be examining more closely in a later chapter, treated Jerome’s early education under his parents with similar words, also calling Jerome a young man ‘of the highest hope’.<sup>261</sup>

These descriptions of Jerome’s early education had little basis in the facts of Jerome’s life that can be drawn from his letters and other works. Erasmus and Zacchia knew no more about the reasons for which Jerome’s parents so carefully educated him than Megan Williams, who guessed that ‘his parents hoped that he would pursue a career that would yield a return on their investment in his education’.<sup>262</sup> This hypothesis does seem more probable than what Erasmus put forward in his *Life*, for Jerome’s first undertaking after his education was to pack his bags for the emperor Valentinian’s capital at Trier, where he and his friend Bonosus were probably looking for work with the imperial administration.<sup>263</sup> Of course Erasmus was aware of all of this, as he was of Jerome’s own testimony in his letter *Plus Deum tribuere* to Rufinus that it was only in Trier that he ‘first began to want to worship’

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<sup>260</sup> VH 197-203: Quis non iam nunc in summam erectus spem, novum quiddam de hoc praesagiat puero? Primum reputans talem parentum animum, deinde felicissimam indolem, ingenium foecundum ac facilem, pectus ardens et infatigabile. Praeterea Romam educatricem, id temporis, opinor, aliquanto quam nunc incorruptiorem. Denique praeceptores eximios, Donatum in grammaticis, Victorinum in rhetoricis.

<sup>261</sup> For more about Zacchia see Babinger, ‘Laudivius Zacchia’, 3-42. See 1495 Zacchia, page marked ‘a ii’: Cum pater summos rei publicae magistratus ac dignitatis locum obtinisset Hieronymum qui tunc pie indolis optime ad summa natus videbatur litteris ac bonis artibus institui curavit. Quas ita avidissime praediscebat, ut cum his unice impensius caeteris vacaret, nimio saepe studio ac diligentia a parentibus increparetur...Haec tamen omnia singularis forme decor venustabat, ut nihil in Hieronymo desideraretur, quod ad summam spem divini hominis affuturi videretur. Haec prima eius rudimenta fuisse memorant. Haec summa omnium expectatio.

<sup>262</sup> Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 16.

<sup>263</sup> Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 17.

Christ.<sup>264</sup> It bears keeping in mind Andrew Cain's observation, however, that even when Jerome left behind the possibility of a career in the imperial administration, he was not 'relinquishing his professional ambitions; he simply was turning them in another direction, from the secular to the sacred'. According to Cain, the fourth century was a time where career prospects in the Church 'rivalled those in the civic sphere', and here we can remark an interesting similarity between the fourth-century and sixteenth-century Church.<sup>265</sup> With only spotty sources, in this case Erasmus used guesswork and rhetoric in order to mould his readers' understanding of Jerome's life, presenting the saint's early education as the ideal formation that he championed in his own pedagogical writings such as *De pueris instituendis* and *Institutio principis Christiani*, the latter of which Erasmus also wrote and published in 1516. In these two works Anna Morisi Guerra has found wording similar to what we see in Erasmus' account of Jerome's youth in the *Life*.<sup>266</sup> Even in his more straightforward treatment of the details of Jerome's early life and education, Erasmus let his rhetorical goals shape his interpretation of the 'facts', and he did not always stand as fast as possible by the 'critical' standards for good history that he had staked out in the *Life*'s beginning.

Such rough edges notwithstanding, Erasmus' treatment of Jerome's early education did, all told, carefully and thoroughly use available sources in order to weave together his story of the young Jerome trained by pagan Antiquity's best teachers and thereafter steeped in its foremost literary and philosophical works, the first fruits of the pagan Classical world. Owing to his grounding in these works, the saintly doctor was later able to write and to work for Christ's glory as few could before him or after him. Erasmus carefully traced out

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<sup>264</sup> Jerome, Letter 3, 5: Gratias tibi, domine Iesu, quod in die tuo habeo, qui pro me te possit rogare. Scis ipse ut ego et ille a tenera pariter infantia ad florentem usque adoleverimus aetatem, ut idem nos nutricum sinus, idem amplexus foverint baiulorum et, cum post Romana studia ad Rheni semibarbaras ripas eodem cibo, pari frueremur hospitio, ut ego primus coeperim velle te colere.

<sup>265</sup> Cain, *Letters of Jerome*, 199.

<sup>266</sup> Morisi Guerra, 'La leggenda', 23.

Jerome's studies of *bonae litterae* ('good letters') by culling out and citing his letters and commentaries, such as when he recounted that Jerome, 'imbued with the rudiments of Christian piety and at the same time with a liberal education commensurate with his age, while still a child...was sent to Rome, the most distinguished teacher, as it were, in that era of both religious and secular learning, to be instructed in the liberal arts, as he himself declares in the eleventh chapter of his commentary on Ezekiel'.<sup>267</sup> For Erasmus, it was important that Jerome had studied at Rome, the source of Latin learning. 'Although in those times literary studies also flourished among the Gauls, Spaniards and Africans', Erasmus explained that 'in the provinces the character of the people made for some falling off in quality'. 'At Rome', however, 'the very source of these studies, they remained purer and less corrupt'.<sup>268</sup> Erasmus used contemporary sources in order to confirm his interpretation of the degenerating learning of the Roman provinces in Jerome's day, remarking that 'Jerome himself praises the mother of the monk Rusticus for sending her son to Rome so that Roman dignity might temper the splendour and flamboyance of Gallic speech'.<sup>269</sup> In this case Erasmus faithfully represented his sources, repeating many words and phrases from one of Jerome's letters to Rusticus and not going beyond what the sources can tell us with reasonable certainty.<sup>270</sup>

Notwithstanding Erasmus' praise and promotion of *bonae litterae* throughout his career, whereas many of Jerome's earlier biographers accepted without qualms the claims

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<sup>267</sup> VH 170-174: ...ac mox Christianae pietatis rudimentis imbutus, simulque bonis litteris, quarum ea tum aetas capax esse poterat, puer adhuc Romam missus est, velut ad primariam eo saeculo tum religionis tum eruditionis magistrum, liberalibus studiis erudiendus, quod ipse declarat enarrans Ezechielis caput undecimum. To my knowledge it is in the twelfth chapter of his commentary on Ezekiel, not the eleventh, that Jerome spoke of his boyhood studies in Rome. See PL 25, 375 A-B: Dum essem Romae puer, et liberalibus studiis erudirer, solebam cum caeteris eiusdem aetatis et propositi, diebus Dominicis sepulcra apostolorum et martyrum circuire...

<sup>268</sup> VH 175-178: Quamvis enim illis temporibus et apud Gallos, Hispanos, et Afros florerent litterarum studia, tamen in provinciis pro gentis ingenio nonnihil degenerantes, Romae velut in suo fonte puriores adhuc erant et incorruptiores.

<sup>269</sup> VH 178-181: Atque hoc nomine Rustici Monachi matrem collaudat ipse, quod post Galliarum licet florentissima studia filium Romam miserit, quo Gallicanae dictionis nitorem ac luxum Romana gravitas temperaret.

<sup>270</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 6.

that Jerome's teachers at Rome were the famous rhetorician Victorinus and the grammarian Donatus, it was hagiography's arch-humanist Erasmus who cast doubts on Jerome's pedigree in Classical learning through the careful reading and presentation of contemporary sources. In this respect Erasmus followed Giannozzo Manetti (1396-1459), who went farther than Erasmus and suppressed altogether the idea that Victorinus was Jerome's teacher.<sup>271</sup> This is in contrast with many earlier biographers of Jerome who unquestioningly ascribed to Jerome two of Classical Antiquity's most well-known pedagogues. Jacobus de Voragine recounted that 'Jerome went to Rome still a boy', where he 'was thoroughly educated in Greek, Latin and Hebrew letters', having 'Donatus for his teacher in grammar, Victorinus the orator in rhetoric'.<sup>272</sup> *Plaerosque nimirum*'s treatment of Jerome's early Roman education is more detailed, engaging the same sources but making more use of them than Erasmus:

So that the Lord could build up an impregnable wall against the faithless and wild-headed heretics, in the study of letters this man [Jerome] had many *cathagetae*; that is, teachers. Surely he studied under Donatus the *arthigraphus*, who drilled into him the elements of Roman style and duly filled him with the taste for the liberal arts, as he himself tells us in his *Chronicles*: 'Victorinus the rhetorician, and Donatus the grammarian, my teachers, were then famous at Rome.'<sup>273</sup>

The writer of *Plaerosque nimirum* accepted that Victorinus and Donatus were Jerome's teachers and then pointed out one of Jerome's later teachers in Constantinople, Gregorius Nazianzenus, about whom Jerome wrote in *De viris illustribus*:

Gregory Nazianzenus (as [Jerome] recounts in the third book of his commentary on Isaiah) the didact was [Jerome's] teacher. For when he comes to the place in the aforementioned prophet's book, where he has to explain something about *seraphim*, he reasons thus, saying: 'About thirty years ago, while I was being instructed in the study of sacred letters in Constantinople with that most eloquent man

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<sup>271</sup> Leuker, 'Eine Kritische', 135.

<sup>272</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 33r: Hic adhuc iuuenis Romam adiit et litteris Graecis et Latinis et Hebraicis plene eruditus est. In arte grammatica Domnatum habuit praeceptorem, in rhetorica autem Victorinum oratorem.

<sup>273</sup> See PL 22, 202: Nam ut inexpugnabilem suae Ecclesiae Dominus murum contra perfidos dementesque haereticos erigeret; huic viro in litterarum studiis plerique (καθηγήτας) cathagetae, id est, praeceptores fuere. Donatus nempe arthigraphus, Romanis eum imbuens elementis, liberaliumque artium sapore sufficienter replens magister extitit illi, sicut ipse in Chronica sua meminit, dicens: 'Victorinus rhetor, et Donatus grammaticus magistri et praeceptores mei, Romae insignes habebantur.'



Gregory Nazianzenus my teacher, at that time the same city's bishop, I remember that I dictated a short and off-the-cuff tract on this vision, so that I might test my wit and obey my friends' pleas'.<sup>274</sup>

In contrast, Erasmus did not accept wholesale Jerome's testimony and questioned how important Gregory Nazianzenus' teaching truly was to Jerome:

He calls Gregory of Nazianzenus his teacher, and he testifies that he had learned sacred Scripture under his tutelage. But where he had studied with this man or for how long is not quite clear to me. Gregory had changed his way of life. Voluntarily giving up his bishopric and secluding himself in the country he lived the life of a monk, according to Jerome's *De viris illustribus*.<sup>275</sup>

Whereas the author of *Plaerosque nimirum* was willing to take Jerome at his word, Erasmus questioned the traditional narrative of Jerome's education taken from the saint's own writings, which Erasmus had called the most 'trustworthy' source of all. In his letters *Litterae tuae* as well as in his letter *Petis, Nepotiane carissime*, Jerome clearly wished his readers to understand that Nazianzenus was his teacher in Constantinople.<sup>276</sup> In his *Contra Rufinum*, Jerome '[gloried and rejoiced]' that Nazianzenus was his teacher, a man to whom, in his eyes, no Latin writer could compare.<sup>277</sup> Nazianzenus was a Church Father whom Erasmus also honoured and knew well, having even taken the 1504 Aldine octavo edition of his poems with him to Italy as a 'travelling companion'.<sup>278</sup> Therefore, we might easily foresee Erasmus' embracing the idea that Jerome had studied at length under the great Greek Church Father, an

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<sup>274</sup> See PL 22, 202: Gregorium namque Nazianzenum (ut idem in tertio explanationum Isaiae refert libro) didascalum, id est, magistrum suum fuisse testatur. Nam cum in praedicto Propheta ad eum venisset locum, in quo de Seraphim quiddam debuisset exponere, ita intulit, *dicens: 'De hac visione ante annos circiter triginta, cum essem Constantinopoli, et apud virum eloquentissimum Gregorium Nazianzenum praeceptorem meum, tunc eiusdem urbis Episcopum, sacrarum Scripturarum studiis erudiri, scio me brevem dictasse subitumque tractatum, ut experimentum caperem ingenioli mei, et amicis iubentibus obedirem.'*

<sup>275</sup> VH 770-776: Gregorium Nazianzenum praeceptorem suum appellat, et hoc interpretante se sacras didicisse litteras testatur. Verum ubi nam audierit hominem, aut quanto tempore, parum mihi compertum est. Nam is vitae mutavit institutum, et sponte cedens episcopi locum, ruri abditus, monachi vitam exegit, auctore Hieronymo in Catalogo vivorum illustrium.

<sup>276</sup> See Jerome, Letter 50, 1: Frustra ergo Alexandri verti commentarios; nequiquam me doctus magister per εἰσαγωγὴν Porphyrii introduxit ad logicam; et, ut humana contemnam, sine causa Gregorium Nazanzenum et Didymum in Scripturis sanctis catechistas habui. See also Jerome, Letter 52, 8: Praeceptor quondam meus Gregorius Nazanzenus rogatus a me ut exponeret quid sibi vellet in Luca sabbatum δευτερόπρωτον, id est 'secunduoprimum', eleganter lusit...

<sup>277</sup> See PL 23, 407: Neque enim Hebraeas literas a te discere debui. An iuiuria tibi facta est, quod pro te Apollinarium, Didymumque sectatus sum? Numquid in illa epistola Gregorium virum eloquentissimum non potui nominare? Quis apud Latinos par sui est? Quo ego magistro gloriator et exulto.

<sup>278</sup> Margolin, *'Fêtes vénitiennes'*, 24.

idea which Vergerio enthusiastically championed in his sermons for Jerome's feast-day, 30 September.<sup>279</sup> Instead, from his own critical reading of Jerome's letters, Erasmus cast doubt on something that we see clearly in Jerome's letters and that should have been appealing to him. In this example we see that Erasmus did not always let himself get carried away by rhetorical goals and that he was able and willing 'critically' to interpret Jerome's letters as historical sources. Even if he claimed and believed that Jerome's writings were the best of all possible sources, Erasmus did not always take Jerome's word for it.

The conclusions that Erasmus drew from contemporary sources are different from those to which Voragine and the author of *Plaerosque nimirum* came after their own look at the same sources. Erasmus spent a long and detailed paragraph in order to treat Jerome's first teachers in Rome, one worth citing in full here for what it reveals to us about how Erasmus could, when he wished to do so, read his sources with great historical skill:

I am aware, however, that some doubt exists whether this was the famous Donatus whose learned commentaries on Terence and Vergil are still extant. Also whether Victorinus had taught him is not fully clear from Jerome's remarks. He recalls both in an appendix to the *Chronicle of Eusebius* in these words: 'Victorinus the rhetorician and Donatus the grammarian, my teacher, are regarded as distinguished men at Rome, and there is a statue of Victorinus in the Forum of Trajan in recognition of his attainments.' Jerome is describing only one of them here, namely Donatus, as his teacher rather than both; otherwise he would have said 'my teachers'. In support of this same inference is the fact that neither in the *De viris illustribus* nor anywhere else, as far as I remember, does he call Victorinus his teacher when he mentions him. Indeed, it seems that Jerome gave scant approval to Victorinus' entire style. This he states without any obscurity in a letter he wrote to the monk Paulinus when he says: 'Victorinus crowned with the glorious crown of martyrdom cannot express what he understands.' And again in the *De viris illustribus* he says: 'Victorinus, African by birth, taught rhetoric at Rome during the reign of Constantine, and as a very old man in his devotion to the faith of Christ he wrote books against Arius in the dialectical fashion, very obscure books which even the learned do not understand.' But concerning Victorinus I leave judgement to the reader. Concerning Donatus, however, Jerome removed every doubt in the first part of his *Contra Rufinum* in these words: 'I believe that as a boy you read Asper's commentaries on Vergil and Sallust, Vulcatius' on the orations of Cicero, Victorinus' on the latter's dialogues, and the commentaries of my teacher Donatus on the comedies of Terence as well as on Vergil, and those of others on other writers.' He also cites Donatus in the same way in his exposition of the first chapter of Ecclesiastes.<sup>280</sup>

<sup>279</sup> See McManamon's critical edition of these texts in *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome*.

<sup>280</sup> VH 203-230: Etiam si video quosdam ambigere, num hic fuerit Donatus ille cuius exstant in Terentium ac Maronem eruditissimi commentarii. Tum an Victorino praeceptore sit usus, non satis liquet ex Hieronymi verbis, quibus utriusque meminit in Appendice Annalium Eusebii hunc in modum: 'Victorinus rhetor et Donatus grammaticus, praeceptor meus, Romae insignes habentur; e quibus Victorinus etiam statuam in Foro Traiani meruit.' Hactenus Hieronymus, magis exprimens alterum, nempe Donatum, sibi praeceptorem fuisse quam

This historical work was largely in line with the sources that Erasmus cited and mentioned, such as the first chapter of Jerome's commentaries on Ecclesiastes, in which Jerome explained a line in Terence with the words of 'my teacher, Donatus'.<sup>281</sup> To my mind, the above passage represents some of Erasmus' best and most careful historical work in the *Life*, in which he used contemporary sources in order to show clearly that the traditional narrative about Jerome's early education could not be taken for granted. What I find most interesting about this passage, however, is that Erasmus used early Christian sources in order to tear down a traditional narrative attractive to and enthusiastically championed by Christian humanist scholars such as Vergerio.<sup>282</sup> It must be noted, however, that Erasmus accepted that Donatus was Jerome's teacher and questioned that Gregorius Nazianzenus was his teacher based on the same evidence: Jerome had clearly called both of these men his 'teachers'.

In the foregoing example we also see the upshot of a noteworthy textual variant. The author of *Plaerosque nimirum* referred to a passage from Jerome's *Chronicon* in order to show that Victorinus and Donatus were Jerome's teachers at Rome: 'Victorinus the rhetorician, and Donatus the grammarian, my masters and my teachers, were famous in

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utrumque, dicturus alioqui, 'praeceptores mei'. Ad eandem coniecturam facit quod idem nec in Catalogo Scriptorum illustrium, nec usquam alibi quantum commemini, Victorini faciens mentionem, praeceptorem appellet. Quin totam Victorini dictionem parum approbasse videtur Hieronymus; id quod haudquaquam obscure declarat in epistola quam scripsit ad Paulinum Monachum, cum ait: 'Inclito Victorinus martyrio coronatus, quod intelligit eloqui non potest.' Et rursum in Catalogo Scriptorum illustrium: 'Victorinus', inquit, 'natione Afer, Romae sub Constantio principe rhetoricam docuit, et in extreme senectute, Christi se tradens fidei, scripsit adversus Arium libros more dialectico, valde obscuros, qui et ab eruditissimis non intelliguntur.' Verum de Victorino quidem lectoris facio iudicium. Caeterum ipse de Donato dubitationem omnem ademit in Apologia priore adversus Ruffinum, hisce verbis: 'Puto quod puer legeris Asperi in Vergilium et Sallustium Commentarios, Vulcatii in Orationes Ciceronis, Victorini in Dialogos eius, et in Terentii Comoedias praeceptoris mei Donati aequae in Vergilium, et aliorum in alios.' Citat eundem enarrans caput Ecclesiastae primum.

<sup>281</sup> See PL 23, 1019 A: Unde praeceptor meus Donatus, cum istum versiculum exponeret: 'Pereant', inquit, 'qui ante nos nostra dixerunt'.

<sup>282</sup> Time and again in his orations in praise of Jerome Vergerio seems inspired by Jerome's studies under Gregorius Nazianzenus. See McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: the Humanist as Orator, passim*.

Rome.<sup>283</sup> In Erasmus' *Life*, we find this same quote from the *Chronicles* written differently: 'Victorinus the rhetorician and Donatus the grammarian, my teacher, are regarded as distinguished men at Rome.'<sup>284</sup> Therefore, the different interpretation of Jerome's education that we see in *Plaerosque nimirum* could have owed something to this textual variant. In the text of *Plaerosque nimirum* found at the end of the 1516 Edition's second volume, this quotation reads 'my masters and my teachers' (*magistri et praeceptores mei*). It is likely that Erasmus was aware of these textual variations and chose the one most suited to his interpretation, but we cannot be certain about this.

In the *Life*'s last paragraph treating Jerome's early education in the pagan Classics, Erasmus, after giving his readers yet more detail about these studies, explained the reasons for which Jerome undertook the study of pagan Classical letters with such zeal, such that he 'left no kind of learning untouched':

Influenced by scholars of this calibre he now gained greater maturity in the study of literature, and he left no branch of knowledge untouched. He applied himself to Porphyry's *Isagoge* and to the philosophy of Aristotle, Plato, the Stoics and all the others. He became acquainted with them; he did not surrender himself to them, nor did he grow old with them, as if on the rocks of the Sirens upon which very many now end their days. But he occupied himself with rhetoric more diligently; this after he had tasted all the disciplines, especially those which have greater relevance to that art: history, cosmography and the knowledge of Antiquity.<sup>285</sup>

Erasmus explained Jerome's motives for serious and lengthy study of pagan Classical literature and philosophy, from which he plucked but by which he was not overcome:

The reason [for these studies] was in part [Jerome's] belief that up to this time theology in the Latin world was practically incapable of effective speech, a situation, he felt, that turned very many away from reading theological works. He hoped that readers would take more pleasure in sacred literature if theologians were to match the majesty of their discipline with dignity in style. And in part it was his

<sup>283</sup> See PL 22, 202: Victorinus rhetor, et Donatus grammaticus, magistri et praeceptores mei, Romae insignes habebantur.

<sup>284</sup> VH 207-208: Victorinus rhetor et Donatus grammaticus, praeceptor meus, Romae insignes habentur.

<sup>285</sup> VH 231-238: Sub huiusmodi praeceptoribus, iam adultior in bonis litteris, nullum doctrinae genus intactum reliquit. Porphyrii Εἰσαγωγὴν, Aristotelicam, Platoniam, Stoicam, ac ceterorum omnium philosophiam attigit. Verum haec delibavit, non his semet addixit, nec in his velut ad scopulos Sirenaeos consenuit, quibus hodie plerique immorimur. In rhetorica tamen sese studiosius exercuit, degustatis omnibus, sed his praecipue quae propius ad eam conferant facultatem, historia, cosmographia, et antiquitatis notitia...

purpose that some day he might have the power to refute the pagans who viewed the Christians with contempt for their lack of eloquence and style. He testifies to this in many passages, and if this were not so, his writings proclaim that he had been most diligent in declamatory exercises and that in his youth he had amused himself with fictitious debates and the devious tricks of the rhetoricians.<sup>286</sup>

In these words we come back to the core idea of Erasmus' interpretation of Jerome's early life, an interpretation that we can rightly call incomplete. To be sure, at many moments in his writings Jerome is clearly proud of his past education. Williams has summed up many of Jerome's earlier works by remarking that his 'devotion to the Scriptures is entirely compatible with a tendency to cite Horace whenever an opportunity presents itself'. From looking at Jerome's earlier writings, Williams has concluded that in the 370s, 'there is no evidence that his effort to define a persona as a Christian writer had, as yet, set Jerome at odds with his own Latin Classical culture'.<sup>287</sup> We see this even later in Jerome's career, such as in his apologetic letter from the 390s, *Litterae tuae*, in which he lumped together the holy and the worldly in a sarcastic remark.<sup>288</sup> And yet, despite the saint's continued use of the pagan Classics, Erasmus overlooked Jerome's ambivalence about the value and the goodness of his past Classical education, which he clearly showed later in his career.<sup>289</sup> Jerome's life-long fence-sitting about this matter is clear in his shilly-shallying answer to Rufinus' charge of perjury in his *Contra Rufinum*, in which Jerome went to great lengths to explain how he could have been able to cite Cicero from memory without having read him since his youth.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> VH 238-247: ...partim quod intelligeret apud Latinos ad id usque temporis paene infantem esse theologiam, et ob hanc causam permultos a divinorum voluminum abhorrere lectione, sperans futurum ut plures sacris litteris delectarentur, si quis theologiae maiestatem dignitate sermonis aequasset; partim ut esset aliquando quod ethnicis obicere posset, Christianos ut infantes et elingues despicientibus. Testatur id multis in locis; et si non testaretur, libri clamitant illum in declamatoria palaestra diligentissime versatum fuisse, puerum in fictis controversiis et obliquis rhetorum strophis lusisse.

<sup>287</sup> Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 25.

<sup>288</sup> Jerome, Letter 50, 1.

<sup>289</sup> Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 18.

<sup>290</sup> See *Adversus Libros Rufini* 1, 30-31 in PL 23, 421 C: Obicit mihi periurium, et mixtum sacrilegio, quod in libro quo ad instituendam Christi virginem loquor, ante tribunal iudicis dormiens pollicitus sim, numquam me litteris saecularibus daturum operam, et nihilominus damnatae eruditionis interdum meminerim...Nunc quod instat, pro sacrilegio atque periurio somnii respondendum est. Dixi me saeculares litteras deinceps non lecturum: de futuro sponsio est, non praeteritae memoriae abolitio. Et quomodo, inquires, tenes, quod tanto tempore non relegis? Rursum si aliquid de veteribus libris respondero, et dixero, 'adeo in teneris consuescere multum est': dum renuo, crimen incurro, et pro me testimonium proferens, hoc ipso arguor, quo defendor.

In his answer to Rufinus' charges, Jerome left himself considerable wiggle-room, remarking that he would have taken the trouble to answer Rufinus, 'even if I had promised these things while awake. But now – a new kind of impudence – he throws into my face my dream'!<sup>291</sup> Jerome did not, however, admit to having read Cicero since his youth, something that, according to Erasmus, 'no sane man' could believe.<sup>292</sup> In the above passages from *Contra Rufinum*, Jerome did give a bit of the lie to Erasmus' strong views on this matter, for even if he did not deny outright the consultation of worldly books after his *Somnium*, he did unmistakably dissimulate (*dissimulare*).

In order to finish our look at Erasmus' treatment of the young Jerome's *Institutio* (education), I shall make three remarks. Firstly, Erasmus put together a narrative of the saint's early life and education that was more thorough and accurate than any before it. His story of Jerome's early life and education drew skilfully from a wide range of contemporary sources and was free from many mistakes that had beset prior writings about this part of the saint's life (e.g. Jerome did not learn Hebrew in Rome, as we read in the *Legenda Aurea*). Second, although Erasmus did allow himself some freedom to guess about Jerome's early life, and therefore went beyond what we can know from the sources with any certainty, his guesses were generally plausible given the facts of Jerome's life that we can sift out from his letters and his other writings. Third, Erasmus framed his portrait of Jerome such as to make it faithful to his narrative's overall thrust, which was that Jerome's early life and education laid the foundations of his future greatness. This idea was common to almost all Jerome's prior biographers, and in her 2008 biography of the saint Megan Williams reached a similar

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Scilicet nunc longo sermone texendum est, quod probant conscientiae singulorum. Quis nostrum non meminit infantiae suae?

<sup>291</sup> See PL 23, 423 B: Haec dicerem, si quippiam vigilans promissem. Nunc autem, novum impudentiae genus, obiicit mihi somnium meum.

<sup>292</sup> VH 1163-1167.

conclusion.<sup>293</sup> Time and again Erasmus turned back to this theme in his *Life* and in his appraisals of Jerome elsewhere, in which Jerome's eloquence and learning helped him best to carry the day for Christ against pagan and heretical foes.<sup>294</sup> As did Vergerio and the author of *Plerosque nimirum*,<sup>295</sup> Erasmus believed that Jerome turned out such an effective a fighter for and bulwark of the Catholic Church on account of his unmatched learning, acquired from some of pagan Antiquity's best teachers.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: the Humanist as Orator*, 179.

<sup>294</sup> Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 18.

<sup>295</sup> See PL 22, 202.

<sup>296</sup> VH 192-196.

## PART I: CHAPTER IV

### EARLY CHRISTIAN MONASTICISM IN THE *LIFE OF JEROME*

Erasmus began his story of Jerome's adult life with his baptism, recounting that Jerome 'had received the vesture of Christ' at Rome.<sup>297</sup> Erasmus rightly understood that when Jerome wrote about taking on 'the vesture of Christ' in the Eternal City,<sup>298</sup> he was referring to his baptismal robes.<sup>299</sup> Pseudo-Gennadius and the author of *Plaerosque nimirum* clearly shared this interpretation of 'the vesture of Christ' to which Jerome referred in his letter *Quoniam vetusto*.<sup>300</sup> According to Erasmus, 'after receiving a thorough education in profane literature, which some call secular', Jerome followed the example of Pythagoras, Plato and Apollo by travelling widely, visiting libraries and learning whatever he could for the embellishment of Christian life.<sup>301</sup> Erasmus claimed that only after a thorough education and many experiences of the world did Jerome begin seriously to think about what kind of life he should lead:

He then began to think about choosing a way of life and about a suitable place, because he was not unaware that human happiness depends above all on the assumption of a mode of life suited to a

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<sup>297</sup> VH 259-260: Id satis indicat in epistola quadam ad Damasum papam, testificans sese eius urbis fidem velle sequi, in qua Christi vestem accepisset.

<sup>298</sup> Jerome, Letter 15, 1: Quoniam vetusto oriens inter se populorum furore conlisus indiscissam Domini tunicam et desuper textam, minutatim per frusta discerpit et Christi vineam exterminant vulpes ut, inter lacus contritos qui aquam non habent, difficile ubi fons signatus et hortus ille conclusus sit possit intelligi, ideo mihi cathedram Petri et fidem apostolico ore laudatam censui consulendam, inde nunc meae animae postulans cibum unde olim Christi vestimenta suscepi.

<sup>299</sup> VH 256-263: Hic interim apparet Hieronymum Christo renatum, in illius iurasse verba ut hoc certe nomine Roma iure sibi posset hunc virum asserere: quandoquidem a baptismo denique censemur Christiani. Id satis indicat in epistola quadam ad Damasum papam, testificans sese eius urbis fidem velle sequi, in qua Christi vestem accepisset. Nec enim de presbyterio sentit, opinor, sed in baptismo vestis candida dabatur, symbolum innocentiae, et lotis mandabatur ut candorem vestium suarum illibatam servarent.

<sup>300</sup> For Pseudo-Gennadius see PL 22, 175: Vestem Christi puer Romae suscepit, ibique litteris Graecis ac Latinis a primaevo eruditus est. For *Plaerosque nimirum* see PL 22, 201-202: In qua videlicet litteris Graecis et Latinis diligenter apprime eruditus, et Christi vestem suscipiens, presbyter quoque Cardinalis ibidem est ordinatus.

<sup>301</sup> VH 264-282.



person's natural disposition and chosen by careful reflection and not by chance. For some plunge headlong into a way of life before they know themselves. And some, on the other hand, death overtakes while they delay and deliberate.<sup>302</sup>

In contrast to the overly hasty and overly hesitant, Erasmus set forward the example of Jerome, who earnestly and carefully looked for the life that would best suit him only after acquiring a large store of worldly and of Christian learning which enabled him better to understand himself and his suitability for different ways of life. For Jerome, to stay at Rome would not do. According to Erasmus, 'that ancient Rome still smacked of paganism and that youth had too little protection against the fleshpots of that city, since somewhere he calls it Babylon'.<sup>303</sup> No safer for the young Jerome was the town of his birth that was, in Erasmus' words, 'corrupted by uncouth pleasures'. In order to show Jerome's low opinion of his birthplace Erasmus cited his letter *Non debet charta*, in which the saint wrote of his native Stridon: 'backwoods that it is, man's belly is god, and he lives for the day, and the holier man is the one who has more money.'<sup>304</sup>

The next sentences in Erasmus's *Life* stressed again the debasement of Christianity and of civilization that was taking place even in Jerome's day. Erasmus explained the reasons for which Jerome first thought about leaving the world in order wholly to dedicate himself to sacred studies and to Christ by pointing out the still corrupting influences of paganism:

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<sup>302</sup> VH 283-288: Sub haec coepit de deligendo vitae genere, deque loco commodo cogitare, quod haud nesciret hinc praecipuam hominis pendere felicitatem, si institutum ingenio accommodum iudicio non casu sumeret. Sunt enim qui se praecipites dant in vitae rationem, priusquam sibi noti sint ipsi. Et sunt e diverso quos cunctantes et deliberantes mors occupat.

<sup>303</sup> VH 288-291: Reputabat animo, Romam adhuc veterem sapere Paganismum, et inter eius urbis delicias parum esse tutam adolescentiam, ut quam alicubi Babylonem appellet. For the source of this quote, see Jerome, Letter 45, 6: Haec, mi domina Asella, cum iam navem conscenderem raptim flens dolensque conscripsi, et gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit. Ora autem, ut de Babylone Hierosolyma regrediar nec mihi dominetur Nabuchodonosor, sed Iesus, filius Iosedech; veniat Hesdras, qui interpretatur 'adiutor', et reducat me in patriam meam.

<sup>304</sup> Jerome, Letter 7, 5: In mea enim patria rusticitatis vernacula deus venter est et de die vivitur: sanctior est ille, qui ditior est. See VH 291-294: ...deinde suam quoque patriam barbaricis voluptatibus esse corruptam, quod ipse non dissimulans in epistola quadam: 'In mea,' inquit, 'patria rusticitatis vernacula Deus venter est, et in diem vivitur, et sanctior est ille qui ditior est.'

Even at that stage the world in which Christians and pagans then were intermingled offended the pious sensibilities of the young Jerome. The inevitable result was that among those who professed Christ the majority were Christians in name rather than in their way of life and that for truly upright minds the desire to live a devout life was more real than the ability to do so.<sup>305</sup>

Although this was not a blanket condemnation of pagan Classical learning and culture, Erasmus made it clear that the young Jerome was rightly revolted by what he saw in the pagan world, in its mores and in its harmful influence on contemporary Christianity.<sup>306</sup> Erasmus repeated this idea in his commentary on the letter to Heliodorus, *Quanto Amore*, in which he argued that Christians in Jerome's day had better grounds for seeking out the monastic life owing to the pagan world's brutality and persecution.<sup>307</sup> Such presentation of Jerome's disgust for many aspects of pagan Antiquity reminds us that Erasmus did not uncritically embrace the pagan Classics but rather argued for the careful integration of their better achievements into far superior Christian culture, doctrine and letters.<sup>308</sup> In many of his works, from his poem *De singulari laude Gabrielis angeli* ('On the Unique Glory of the Angel Gabriel') to his foreword to Suetonius' *De vita Caesarum* (*Lives of the Caesars*) first published in 1518, Erasmus condemned pagan Antiquity's hopelessness, criminality and bloodthirstiness.<sup>309</sup> In later life Erasmus treated even Seneca, long greatly esteemed by

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<sup>305</sup> VH 294-301: Proinde communicato cum sodalibus consilio, de secessu cogitavit, quo liberius et expeditius se totum sacris studiis et Christo dedicaret. Iam tum pium adolescentis animum offendeat mundus, qui ea tempestate Christianos ethnicis habebat admixtos. Unde fieri necessum erat, ut qui Christum profitebantur, plerique titulo magis quam vita essent Christiani, et vere probis mentibus pie vivendi votum adesset verius quam facultas.

<sup>306</sup> For a modern appraisal see Momigliano, *Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity*, 36.

<sup>307</sup> See Appendix IX for the *scholion* to the letter *Quanto studio et amore* beginning *Solum pietatis genus* (1516 Edition I, f. 3r): Olim cum maxima mortalium pars sacrificaret idolis, Christiani afflicti ab illis, et non ferenetes quotidianas in Christum blasphemias, fugiebant in solitudines, et mundum impium ac perniciosum, iure vitabant. Nunc cum ubique colatur Christus, quorsum attinet fugere?

<sup>308</sup> We can see this, for example, in Erasmus' scornful description of Pope Julius II in his letter to Jacob Busleiden, where the Pope is unflatteringly compared with Gaius Julius Caesar. See Allen 206, 38-39: Summus Pontifex Iulius belligeratur, vincit, triumphat, planeque Iulium agit.

<sup>309</sup> For *De singulari Laude Gabrielis angeli* see CWE 85, page 112-115: Nec salus olim, neque spes salutis/Ulla erat sed mors stygiis profecta/Sedibus, gentem rapiebat omnem/Vindice nullo. In the foreword to Suetonius' *Vitae Caesarum* Erasmus wrote (cited from edition with shelf-mark K 1023 at the Humanist Library): Primum in Iulio scelerate, mox in Octavio Lepido et Antonio sceleratius. Quid non potest fortunae libido in rebus humanis? Potestas ea quam postea diis aequavit hominum consensus, impietate, caedibus, parricidiis, incestis, tyrannide, condita consecrataque fuit. His felicibus auspiciis coepit illa regibus adorata maietas. Ac sceleratius

Christians, with considerable reserve.<sup>310</sup> When it came to the mores and to the politics of the pagan Classical world, there was much that Erasmus deemed unworthy of Christians and to which he bade good riddance.

Steeped in the culture and in the learning of this pagan Classical world, Jerome chose to take on baptism at a young age and to follow Christ. According to Erasmus, when weighing the walks of life open to him, Jerome saw in marriage, ‘even were nothing else to go wrong, the sure shipwreck of freedom’.<sup>311</sup> Erasmus suggested that the life of priests and of bishops was no more appealing to the young Jerome since ‘honours, wealth and worldly concerns overwhelmed even them, whether they wished it or not, and carried them astray’, making their state one ‘exposed to the gravest perils’.<sup>312</sup> What is more, ‘the life of many of them displeased him, for even then the priestly devotion that characterized earlier times was degenerating into tyranny and arrogance’.<sup>313</sup> For these reasons, and only after he had ‘weighed the matter in all its aspects’, Jerome undertook the monastic way of life.<sup>314</sup> Erasmus’ presentation was clear, powerful and pointed: Jerome discerned and followed a vocation to true monasticism that was an example for all Christians. Jerome’s actions as told in the *Life* were much in line with the vocational discernment that Erasmus recommended and the spirituality which he promoted in his *Colloquia (Colloquies)* and in his other writings

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fere propagata fuit quam nata. Foeda barbarorum militum colluvies, non suffragiis, sed insanis tumultibus dominum orbi dabat.

<sup>310</sup> John Papy, ‘Erasmus’ and Lipsius’ Editions of Seneca’, in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 22 (2012): 18.

<sup>311</sup> VH 301-302: In matrimonio, ut nihil aliud accideret, certe libertatis naufragium perspiciebat. I cannot use the translation of CWE 61 in this case: ‘In marriage he saw indeed the shipwreck of freedom, to say nothing more.’

<sup>312</sup> VH 303-307: Ad haec clericorum et episcoporum statum, quod hos quoque volentes nolentes honos, opes et negotia mundi involuerent ac transversos raperent, gravissimis periculis obnoxium esse. Et multorum vita displicebat, iam tum prisca illa pietate sacerdotum ad tyrannidem ac fastum degenerante.

<sup>313</sup> VH 305-307: Et multorum vita displicebat, iam tum prisca illa pietate sacerdotum ad tyrannidem ac fastum degenerante.

<sup>314</sup> VH 308-312: Pensitatis igitur omnibus ac circumspectis, monachi placuit institutum: quod ne quis in hoc erret, id temporis longe diversum erat ab hoc quod hodie videmus caerimoniis obstrictum; immo quibus maxime libertas erat cordi, hi monachi professionem suscipiebant.

such as *De contemptu mundi* (*On Contempt for the World*).<sup>315</sup> In choosing to take part in the supposedly ‘freer’ monasticism of the Catholic Church of his day, Jerome chose the life that, according to Erasmus, most suited those for whom ‘freedom was especially dear’.<sup>316</sup>

However compelling this presentation be, there is little evidence to support Erasmus’ story of Jerome’s vocational soul-searching and his claims about the supposed ‘freedom’ offered by early Christian monastic life. To take up first the question of Jerome’s vocation, the saint’s letter *Plus Deum tribuere*, like others, did indeed bring up the many travels of his early years. Yet in these letters we do not see Jerome discerning his vocation. Erasmus’ narrative about this part of Jerome’s life relied mostly on guesswork, and we see in it more of Erasmus’ own ideas about how properly to take up the monastic mantle and about an idealized vocational discernment than faithful relaying of information found in Jerome’s letters or in other ‘trustworthy’ primary sources.<sup>317</sup> Nevertheless, up to this point in his *Life*, Erasmus did little more than embellish his sources in order to bolster his ideas and his story’s slant. Or, to use Erasmus’ own words for describing Jerome’s questionable use of Biblical and of literary sources, hitherto Erasmus only ‘twisted a little bit’ (*nonnihil torquere*) Jerome’s words for the sake of his rhetorical goals.<sup>318</sup> This is something that every historian does to some extent, but we have already seen examples in which Erasmus took ‘historical licence’ to its limits. In the *Life*’s next paragraph, in which Erasmus put forward his idealized portrayal of early Christian monastic life, he went beyond these limits and contradicted clear evidence from Jerome’s letters and from other sources in order to pursue unhindered his narrative’s polemical thrust and ‘rhetorical truths’.

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<sup>315</sup> Morisi Guerra, ‘La leggenda’, 24.

<sup>316</sup> See VH 339-348, in which Erasmus claimed: ...Hieronymo placuit summa libertas...

<sup>317</sup> See Jeromes, Letter 7; Letter 45.

<sup>318</sup> See Appendix CVIII for the *scholion* to *In veteri via* beginning *Mortua est, inquit*: Et hunc locum nonnihil torquet Hieronymus. Est autem apud ipsum prophetam, cap. 24. Locutus sum ergo ad populum mane, et mortua est uxor mea vespere etc.

Erasmus treated Jerome's experiences in monastic life at several points in his *Life*, but we find his 'critical' reconstruction of what early Christian monastic life truly was like in a single paragraph of the *Life* beginning *Pensitatis omnibus*. Scholars such as Frazier and Godin have already pointed out Erasmus' idealization of early monasticism,<sup>319</sup> but below we shall look at this remarkable paragraph in greater detail since it will help us to understand better how Erasmus worked as an historian. Firstly, Erasmus emphasized that the monasticism of Jerome's day set freedom above all else:

After he had weighed the matter in all its aspects, therefore, he chose the monastic life. I must say, on the chance that the reader may labour under a misapprehension, that the life of a monk was far different at that time from what we see today, trammelled as it is by ceremonial formality. On the contrary, those for whom freedom especially was dear made their profession as monks.<sup>320</sup>

Monastic vows, Erasmus explained, were not at all binding in Jerome's day as they were later to become, much less forever binding: 'for first of all that freedom continued inviolate once the decision had been made' and 'the power to come and to go as one wished remained.'<sup>321</sup> Erasmus also asserted that monks had 'the most delightful and unrestricted opportunities for literary pursuits', and that, contrary to the petty rules under which sixteenth-century monks such as he himself languished, in Jerome's day monks were either spurred on by their 'own bent to study, fasts, Psalms and vigils' or else attracted to them by example, 'not coerced by the petty rules of men'.<sup>322</sup> Monks' clothing, we are told, 'was simple; it was not, however, prescribed but was the free choice of each. It was a mode of dress that did not make a person conspicuous or call attention to itself by its strange novelty but that displayed a Christian

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<sup>319</sup> See Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 313. Godin, 'Érasme biographe patristique', 357.

<sup>320</sup> VH 308-312: *Pensitatis igitur omnibus ac circumspectis, monachi placuit institutum: quod ne quis in hoc erret, id temporis longe diversum erat ab hoc quod hodie videmus caerimoniis obstrictum; immo quibus maxime libertas erat cordi, hi monachi professionem suscipiebant.*

<sup>321</sup> VH 312-314: *Primum enim res manebat integra, si quis ita censuisset, manebat commigrandi remigrandique quo vellent potestas, manebat dulcissimum ac liberrimum otium.*

<sup>322</sup> VH 314-317: *Ad studium, ieiunia, psalmos, vigilias aut suoapte incitabantur animo aut exemplis invitabantur, non cogeantur hominum constitutiunculis.*

simplicity'.<sup>323</sup> Erasmus' description was almost opposite to Edward Gibbon's colourful account of the 'abject slavery' of early Christian monastic vows, on whose account any runaway monk would be 'pursued, arrested and restored to his perpetual prison'.<sup>324</sup> To the contrary, Erasmus claimed that for monks of this day there were 'no binding vows except those which every Christian takes. Finally if by chance anyone had regretted this choice in life, the entire penalty was simply a criticism of his inconstancy'.<sup>325</sup> To answer naysayers Erasmus cited several of Jerome's works that included details about early Christian monasticism: 'If one seeks confirmation of this, let him read the life of Hilarion, let him read the rule for the monastic life addressed to Rusticus and likewise the one addressed to Paulinus, let him read the letter beginning *Audi filia*, which defines the three kinds of monks in Egypt'.<sup>326</sup> As for the advantages of the monk's life in Jerome's day, to Erasmus's mind they were many:

In fact among other things that kind of life also afforded these advantages; because of it one could more honourably cast off the bonds of affinity and consanguinity, a heavy burden to be sure for one to whom nothing is more pleasurable than freedom for study. Also those who were professed as monks were considered entirely excused from public activities and from service and duties at the imperial court. Lastly they were less vulnerable to the tyranny of some bishops, who even then became overbearing. The title 'monk' in no way militated against the performance of a clerical office; and from no class of men were bishops more often chosen.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> VH 317-320: Vestitus erat simplex, nec is tamen praescriptus, sed suo cuique arbitrio sumptus, non qui prodigiosa novitate faceret insignem et digito notandum, sed qui simplicitatem Christianam prae se ferret.

<sup>324</sup> Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, book 37, 1: After a sufficient trial, the fidelity of the novice was secured by a solemn and perpetual vow; and his irrevocable engagement was ratified by the laws of the church and state. A guilty fugitive was pursued, arrested, and restored to his perpetual prison; and the interposition of the magistrate oppressed the freedom and the merit, which had alleviated, in some degree, the abject slavery of the monastic discipline.

<sup>325</sup> VH 320-322: Votorum nulla vincula, nisi quae sunt cuiusque pure Christiani. Denique si quem forte sui instituti paenitentia cepisset, tota demum poena erat inconstantiae nota.

<sup>326</sup> VH 322-326: Cuius rei si quis fidem requirat, legat Hilarionis Vitam, legat Institutionem Monachi ad Rusticum, et item ad Paulinum, legat in epistola cuius initium, 'Audi filia,' descriptum triplex apud Aegyptios monachorum genus.

<sup>327</sup> VH 326-334: Quin inter alia praestabat et haec commoda illud vitae genus: huius praetextu honestius licebat ab affinium et cognatorum vinculis temet excutere, gravi nimirum onere ei cui nihil dulcius otio studiorum. Etenim qui monachum erant professi a publicis functionibus, a muniis et officiis Imperialis aulae prorsus habebantur excusati. Postremo minus patebant episcoporum quorundam iam tum insolescentium tyrannidi. Iam hic titulus nec a functione clericatus quicquam remorabatur; et ex nullo ordine saepius deligebantur episcopi.

In closing this paragraph on the life of early monks, Erasmus wanted his readers to understand that the monk's profession at that time was nothing other than 'the practice of the original, free and purely Christian life',<sup>328</sup> offering protection from meddlesome family, freedom and leisure for studies and leaving open the possibility of advancement in the Church hierarchy. Lest we confuse early monastic communities, and especially Jerome's, with the institutions into which they would later degenerate, Erasmus stated: 'Attention, I thought, ought to be called to these facts in passing to prevent anyone from the common practice of making Jerome the author of their rule. He has no connection with such rules.'<sup>329</sup>

This last sentence is misleading. Of the many monastic orders springing up in Spain and in Italy from the fourteenth century until the sixteenth century that took from Jerome their inspiration, their names and the example according to which they tried to live, it is hard to imagine that any one of these could have or would have claimed direct descent from Jerome – all the more so since almost all of these communities were originally Augustinian and many of them bound, at least for a time, to live according to the Augustinian rule.<sup>330</sup> For such Hieronymite monks and for many other readers in early sixteenth-century Europe, lay and religious, Erasmus foresaw that his presentation of early monasticism and his critique of contemporary monastic practice might not always go over well. Even if monks such as Johannes Cuno and Conrad Pellikan played an important role in editing the 1516 *Jerome Edition*, and even though many contemporary monks enthusiastically welcomed this work, Erasmus' unflattering comparison of contemporary monkhood with that of Jerome's day was bound to ruffle some cowls. Therefore, he assured readers that they need not take his word

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<sup>328</sup> VH 334-336: Nec aliud quicquam erat tunc monachi professio, quam priscae liberaeque vitae meditatio, ac pure Christianae.

<sup>329</sup> VH 336-338: Haec obiter admonenda duxi ne, qui mos est plerique, Hieronymum sui instituti faciant auctorem, ad quos ille nihil attinet.

<sup>330</sup> For more information about the Hieronymite orders, many of which arose in or near to Erasmus' lifetime, see J.P. Migne's *Dictionnaire des Ordres Religieux* (Paris, 1849), 568-625. Rice discusses these with less detail in *Saint Jerome*, 68-75.

for it, citing Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* (*Life of Hilarion*), his letter to Rusticus *Nihil Christiano*, his letter to Paulinus *Bonus homo* and his well-known letter to Eustochium, *Audi filia* as evidence. It is telling, however, that Erasmus did not cite a passage from any of these letters in order to uphold his arguments about early Christian monasticism. In truth, when we take time to look at these sources, Erasmus' presentation of early monasticism seems unlikely at best, and at the worst wilfully misleading. Whereas Erasmus claimed that monks in Jerome's day, for instance, were moved on their own or invited by example to studies, to fasts, to psalms and to vigils, not compelled by man's petty rules, the very letters that Erasmus cited tell us something different.

The most famous of these letters, *Audi filia*, gave a lengthy and detailed description of rules for three different monastic orders found in the Holy Land in Jerome's day. Describing these orders to Eustochium, Jerome strongly criticized the so-called *Remnuoth*, which Jerome called a 'most debased and scorned' order, 'that is either alone in my province or first came from there'.<sup>331</sup> Among the many reasons that Jerome gave for his disapproval of this order, he condemned its members' affected observances and their habit of eating 'until they threw up whenever any feast day came up'.<sup>332</sup> He also condemned this order's free-wheeling ways, since its members did not subject themselves to obedience to rightful religious authorities: 'They live together in twos or in threes each according to his own wont and rule, and they bring together whatever they reap and have it as common property...Often there are arguments between them, because living from their own food they refuse to be subjected to

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<sup>331</sup> Letter 22, 34: Tria sunt in Aegypto genera monachorum: coenobium quod illi 'sauhes' gentili lingua vocant, nos 'in commune viventes' possumus appellare; anachoretæ, qui soli habitant per deserta et ab eo quod procul ab hominibus recesserint nuncupantur; tertium genus est, quod dicunt remnuoth, deterrimum et neglectum, et quod in nostra provincia aut solum aut primum est.

<sup>332</sup> Letter 22, 34: Apud hos affectata sunt omnia: laxae manicae, caligae follicantes, vestis grossior, crebra suspiria, visitatio virginum, detractatio clericorum, et si quando festior dies venerit saturantur ad vomitum.



others.<sup>333</sup> Whereas Erasmus chose to take this and similar passages from Jerome's letters as evidence that monks were 'freer' in Jerome's day, it is important to understand that in this letter Jerome was *condemning* such freedom in a tone quite unlike Erasmus' praise of monastic freedom in his *Life*. When it came to the monastic life, these two Christian writers' differences become only more remarkable when we look at Jerome's solemn approval of the *Coenobites*, which description I shall cite in full since it went against almost everything that Erasmus claimed in the *Life* about early Christian monastic communities:

[The *Coenobites*'] first unifying principle is to obey their superiors and to do whatever they order. They are divided into groups of ten and of one-hundred, such that each tenth man commands nine others. They live separately in joined cells. Among them it is an ordinance that no one go to another, save for the 'tenth men' whom we mentioned above...after the ninth hour they come together, they recite the Psalms, the Scriptures are read out after their custom and once these prayers are complete and all are sitting down one whom they call father stands among them and begins to preach, and while he speaks there is such a silence that no one dares look at anyone else or even to cough...After this meeting is over, each table of ten goes with its 'father' to the tables which are served in turn by different groups every week. There is no noise made and no one speaks whilst eating. They eat bread, vegetables and herbs seasoned only with salt and with oil. Only the old men take wine, to whom lunch is also given as it is to the young, so that the former's tired age may be sustained and the latter not be broken when they have only just begun. From here they rise together and after singing a hymn, they go back to their rooms...And because at night after public prayers everyone keeps up a private vigil, they go about to the different cells and, putting their ears to the door, try to learn what those inside are doing. If they find a more slothful monk, they do not rebuke him, but pretending not to know anything they visit him more often and first try to spur him to pray more rather than to force him to do so. The work of each day is decreed by the dean and given to a steward who himself gives, with great fear, a report about all expenses to the father of all...On the Lord's day they spend all their time praying and reading; which indeed are the usual occupations whenever work is done. Daily they learn by heart something from the Scriptures. The fast for the whole year is the same save for in Lent, the only time when they are allowed to live more strictly. After Pentecost dinner is pushed forward to lunchtime, so that they stick to the Church's tradition and not overload their stomachs with two meals.<sup>334</sup>

<sup>333</sup> Letter 22, 34: Hi bini vel terni nec multo plures simul habitant suo arbitratu ac dicione viventes, et de eo quod laboraverint in medium partes conferunt ut habeant alimenta communia. Habitant autem quam plurimum in urbibus et castellis, et quasi ars sit sancta, non vita, quidquid vendiderint, maioris est pretii. Inter hos saepe sunt iurgia, quia suo viventes cibo non patiuntur se alicui esse subiectos.

<sup>334</sup> Jerome, Letter 22, 34: His igitur quasi quibusdam pestibus exterminatis, veniamus ad eos qui plures in commune habitant, id est, quos vocari coenobium diximus. Prima apud eos confoederatio est oboedire maioribus et quidquid iusserint facere. Divisi sunt per decurias atque centurias, ita ut novem hominibus decimus habeat. Manent separati sed iunctis cellulis. Usque ad horam nonam quasi iustitium est: nemo pergit ad alium exceptis his quos decanos diximus, ut si cogitationibus forte quis fluctuat illius consoletur alloquiis. Post hoc concilium solvitur, et unaquaeque decuria cum suo parente pergit ad mensas quibus per singulas ebdomadas vicissim ministrant. Nullus in cibo strepitus, nemo comedens loquitur. Vivitur pane, leguminibus et olere quae sale et oleo condiuntur. Vinum tantum senes accipiunt, quibus et parvulis saepe fit prandium, ut aliorum fessa sustentetur aetas, aliorum non frangatur incipiens. Dehinc consurgunt pariter et hymno dicto ad praesepia redeunt. Ibi usque ad vespeream cum suis unusquisque loquitur et dicit: 'vidistis illum et illum, quanta in ipso sit gratia, quantum silentium, quam moderatus incessus?' Si infirmum viderint, consolantur; si in Dei amore ferventem cohortantur ad studium. Et quia nocte extra orationes publicas in suo cubili unusquisque vigilat, circumeunt cellulas singulorum, et aure adposita, quid faciant diligenter explorant. Quem tardiores deprehenderint, non increpant, sed dissimulato quod norunt, eum saepius visitant et prius incipientes

Far from the portrait of live-and-let-live monasticism that Erasmus gives in his *Life* and in his commentaries on Jerome's letters,<sup>335</sup> in *Audi filia* we see instead a rigidly defined hierarchy, several examples of rules and regulations which Erasmus would surely call 'petty' and, last but not least, a Panopticon-like overwatch of fellow monks in order to enforce prayer-life, vigils and fasting. Jerome's letters suggested that many early monks were indeed governed by what Gibbon called 'an inflexible rule'.<sup>336</sup>

Although Jerome remarked that supervising monks did not upbraid their faltering brothers forthwith during their nightly patrols, but instead 'visited them more often and provoked beginners to pray more rather than forcing them', it is clear from Jerome's description of monastic life in *Audi filia* that the 'Coenobites' were, at least in an ideal world, subject to rigid hierarchical control and bound by many ceremonies and traditions on which Erasmus would have most probably frowned. According to Jerome, their first duty was 'to obey their superiors'; they were divided up into military-like units such as *decurias* and *centurias*; they were rarely, if ever, allowed to leave the monastery and they were apparently bound by some kind of monastic rule to take part in regular communal praying of the Psalter

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provocant magis orare quam cogunt. Opus diei statutum est quod decano redditum fertur ad oeconomum, qui et ipse per singulos menses patri omnium cum magno redditu tremore rationem. A quo etiam cibi cum facti fuerint degustantur, et quia non licet dicere cuiquam: 'tunicam et sagum textaque iuncis strata non habeo', ille ita universa moderatur, ut nemo postulet, nemo debeat. Si vero quis coeperit aegrotare, transfertur ad exedram latiore, et tanto senum ministerio confovetur ut nec delicias urbium nec matris quaerat affectum. Dominicis diebus orationi tantum et lectionibus vacant; quod quidem et omni tempore completis opusculis faciunt. Cotidie de scripturis aliquid discitur. Ieiunium totius anni aequale est, excepta quadragesima in qua sola conceditur restrictius vivere. Pentecoste cenae mutantur in prandia, quo et traditioni ecclesiasticae satisfiat et ventrem cibo non onerent duplicato. Tales Philo, Platonici sermonis imitator, tales Iosephus, Graecus Livius, in secunda Iudaicae captivitatis historia Essenos refert.

<sup>335</sup> VH 314-317: Ad studium, ieiunia, psalmos, vigiliis aut suoapte incitabantur animo aut exemplis invitabantur, non cogeantur hominum constitutiunculis.

<sup>336</sup> Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, book 37, 1: The actions of a monk, his words, and even his thoughts, were determined by an inflexible rule, or a capricious superior: the slightest offences were corrected by disgrace or confinement, extraordinary fasts, or bloody flagellation; and disobedience, murmur, or delay, were ranked in the catalogue of the most heinous sins. A blind submission to the commands of the abbot, however absurd, or even criminal, they might seem, was the ruling principle, the first virtue of the Egyptian monks; and their patience was frequently exercised by the most extravagant trials.

and readings from Scripture.<sup>337</sup> All told, these communities were probably not the best place for one, even in Jerome's day, to seek out unchecked freedom and the 'sweetest leisure' for studies. A few lines later, when speaking of the supposedly freer life of the *Anachorites*, Jerome plainly prescribed rules for prayer that should be followed even when alone in the desert. According to him, these rules were known to 'everyone':

We ought to have set hours for prayer such that if we be held back by some chore, the time itself will remind us of our duty. Everyone knows that we are to pray at the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, at dawn and in the evening. You ought not to take any food unless first you pray, nor ought you to leave the table without thanking your creator. In the night one should rise two or three times in order to go over the Scriptures that we have learnt by heart.<sup>338</sup>

All told, Jerome's descriptions of early monastic communities in *Audi filia* seem not to differ much from what we would find in many Catholic religious communities today, where *prime*, matins, lauds, *terce*, *sext*, *none*, vespers and complines are all part of the traditional Catholic Divine Office and therefore monasteries' daily communal prayer. The *Coenobites* especially seem to have kept to a rule much like that of many reformed communities in Erasmus' day and perhaps even at his own Steyn Abbey. Other early Christian writings with which Erasmus was most likely familiar, such as Augustine's, also give evidence of monastic communities whose members undertook a 'regular life of prayer, reading and manual labour' quite unlike Erasmus' presentation of early monks' scholarly *otium* ('leisure') in his *Life of Jerome*.<sup>339</sup> It is hard for me to believe that Erasmus and at least a good number of his learned readers were not aware of the differences between the vision of early monasticism portrayed

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<sup>337</sup> Jerome, Letter 22, 35.

<sup>338</sup> Jerome, Letter 22, 37: Post haec, quamquam apostolus semper orare nos iubeat et sanctis etiam ipse somnus oratio sit, tamen divisas orandi horas habere debemus ut, si forte aliquo fuerimus opere detenti, ipsum nos ad officium tempus admoneat: horam tertiam, sextam, nonam, diluculum quoque et vesperam nemo qui nesciat. Nec cibus a te sumatur nisi oratione praemissa, nec recedatur a mensa nisi referantur gratiae creatori. Noctibus bis terque surgendum, revolvenda de scripturis quae memoriter tenemus.

<sup>339</sup> See Brown, *Augustine*, 140-142. Brown cites Augustine's *De opere monachorum* 29, 37, in which we see Augustine's clear preference for a well-defined monastic regimen. See also Brown, *Augustine*, 199, where he cites Possidius' *Vita Augustini* (*Life of Augustine*) in order to show that Augustine had established a 'austere monastic routine, with a strict vegetarian diet, and an absolute prohibition on female visitors'. We see this clearly in Possidius' *Vita Augustini* 22, 1-7.

with such forcefulness in the *Life of Jerome* and what we actually see in many authoritative early Christian sources.

As for Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* (*Life of Hilarion*), it is likewise hard to see how Erasmus could have used it to uphold his idealized vision of free-wheeling early Christian monasticism. In this work Jerome presented Hilarion as a true master of fasting, who lived from the age of thirty-five to sixty-three eating each day only six ounces of barley and vegetables cooked with oil – indeed, Hilarion only added the luxury of oil to his diet after discovering that the same diet without oil made him lose his eyesight and break out into scabs.<sup>340</sup> In this hagiography Jerome stated that Hilarion's example was in part responsible for founding and for spreading organized monasteries throughout Palestine.<sup>341</sup> Later in the *Vita Hilarionis*, Jerome had his hero carrying out what resembled formal 'visitations' to monasteries in order to correct their individual and collective discipline.<sup>342</sup> Similar visitations later become the favourite tools of fifteenth-century monastic reformers, from the Melk community in Austria to the Camaldolese monk Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439), esteemed as one of early fifteenth-century Florence's greatest humanist scholars.<sup>343</sup> Jerome noted that Hilarion, at the age of sixty-three, was at the head of a large monastery and implied that this position of power and prestige pained the humble monk.<sup>344</sup> While it is true that Hilarion shunned fame and fortune and sought out solitude in Jerome's biography, Hilarion sought not scholarly leisure but rather somewhere better suited for extreme fasts and rigours, and even then he always kept the company of a few brothers who probably remained under his

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<sup>340</sup> Jerome provides details of Hilarion's strict dieting in his *Vita Hilarionis*, 11.

<sup>341</sup> *Vita Hilarionis*, 24: Exemplo itaque eius per totam Palaestinam innumerabilia monasteria esse coeperunt, et omnes ad eum Monachi certatim currere.

<sup>342</sup> *Vita Hilarionis*, 25-28.

<sup>343</sup> Charles Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers: Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439) and Christian Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977) 13; 45. Lorenzo Valla, for example, sent his *De voluptate* to Ambrogio Traversari 'for criticism and correction'.

<sup>344</sup> *Vita Hilarionis*, 29.

authority.<sup>345</sup> All told, it is hard to imagine how Erasmus could have thought that Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* helped to uphold the vision of monasticism which he put forward in his *Life*, and it is surely understandable why he did not cite one word from the *Vita Hilarionis* itself. Although this work did not necessarily refute wholesale Erasmus' vision of early monasticism as presented in the *Life of Jerome*, it did hold evidence that strongly suggested that monastic practices and mores contrary to this vision were commonplace before and during Jerome's lifetime.

Jerome's letter to Paulinus, *Bonus homo*, was less specific in its descriptions of the monastic state. In it Jerome described Paulinus, a widower living in pledged chastity, as a 'monk', thereby pointing to the possibility that early Christian ideas about monkhood may have been different from and broader than the customs of Catholic monkhood in sixteenth-century Europe or in today's Church.<sup>346</sup> But in this letter too Jerome pounded home the need for monastic rigours:

Let your food, to be taken at night and cheap, be herbs and vegetables, while you might reckon some little fish the highest delicacy. Whoever loves Christ is fed of his bread, caring little about with what costly foods his shit be made... You have my books *Adversus Iovianianum* (against Jovinian) that treat more thoroughly the contempt of the stomach and the gullet. Let there always be sacred Scripture in your hands, pray frequently and with your body bent down raise your mind up to the Lord. You ought to sleep with many vigils and on an empty stomach.<sup>347</sup>

Three times now we have seen Jerome defending, upholding and recommending some of the monastic activities, including fasting and waking up in the middle of the night in order to

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<sup>345</sup> *Vita Hilarionis*, 32: Igitur reversus ad Aphroditon, duobus secum tantum retentis fratribus, in vicina eremo moratus est: tanta abstinencia et silentio, ut tunc primum se coepisse Christo servire diceret.

<sup>346</sup> Jerome, Letter 58, 6: Obsecro itaque te, ut quoniam sanctae sororis tuae ligatus es vinculo, et non penitus expedito pergis gradu, sive hic sive ibi, multitudines hominum et officia et salutationes et convivia veluti quasdam catenas fugias voluptatum.

<sup>347</sup> Jerome, Letter 58, 6: Sit vilis et vespertinus cibus holera et legumina, interdumque pisciculos pro summis ducas deliciis. Qui Christum desiderat et illo pane vescitur, non quaerit magnopere quam de pretiosis cibis stercus conficiat. Quicquid post gulam non sentitur, idem tibi sit quod panis et legumina. Habes adversus Iovinianum libros de contemptu ventris et gutturi plenius disserentes. Semper in manu tua sacra sit lectio, frequenter orandum et flexo corpore mens erigenda ad Dominum. Crebrae vigiliae et ventre vacuo saepius dormiendum.

pray, whose abuse Erasmus decried in his *Life* and in many of his other writings.<sup>348</sup> We see this, moreover, in the very letters that Erasmus cited in his *Life* in order to uphold the idea that in ancient Christianity fasts, vigils and other traditional monastic trappings did not exist in any form resembling the fasts and vigils of his own day.

Jerome's treatment of monasticism in *Audi filia*, for example, was not at all a fluke, for we see a similar treatment in another letter to Eustochium written some twenty years after *Audi filia*, beginning *Si cuncta corporis*. This letter in praise of the recently dead Paula, Eustochium's mother and Jerome's long-time patroness, included another account of contemporary monasticism unmistakably at odds with what Erasmus presented to readers in his *Life of Jerome*. Jerome included a painstaking description of the monasteries that Paula had founded in the Holy Land, including one for men and three monastic houses for women:

I shall now speak of the order of the monastery and how she turned saints' continence to her own profit. She sowed fleshy things in order to reap spiritual things: she gave up earthly things so that such might obtain heavenly things: she left fleeting things and sought to change them for sempiternal things. After setting up a monastery for men, which she handed over to men's governance, she divided into three groups and sent to three different monasteries the many women, of noble rank, of middling rank or from the poor's ranks, that she had gathered together from many provinces: and so while they were separate in work and in taking their meals, they came together for Psalms and prayers. After the sounding out of the 'alleluia' (by which sign they were summoned to the Collect) no one was allowed to remain behind. But coming first or among the first, Paula awaited the arrival of others, moving others to work by shame and by example rather than by fear. They sang the Psalter in order [this resembles the Divine Office] in the morning, at the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, at Vespers and in the middle of the night. None of the sisters was allowed to forego the Psalms or not to learn something each day from the Scriptures. On the Lord's day they went off to the church beside which they lived, and each rank followed its own mother [spiritual leader]: and likewise coming back from there they set about their assigned tasks and made clothes either for themselves or for others. If any sister was of noble birth, she was not allowed to have a lady-in-waiting from her house so that such a servant, mindful of her former ways, not be able to stoke up and to renew the old error of licentious youth by dint of much talking. Everyone wore the same habit. Linen was used only to dry the hands. From men there was so strict a separation that she kept her sisters even from eunuchs, lest she give fuel to backbiting tongues that are wont to lash out at the saintly as though it were a consolation for their own misdeeds. If any sister came late to the Psalms or was more sluggish in work, she would be approached in different ways. Were she hot-headed, Paula would coax her; were she patient, Paula would rebuke her; in this she followed the Apostle: 'Do you want me to come after you with the rod, or in the spirit of softness and of mildness?' Aside from food and clothing she allowed herself to own nothing, as Paul said: 'Having food and clothes, be happy with these'; lest that by the habit of having more, room be given for greediness, which is never filled with possessions: and the more that it has, the more it wants; and neither plenty nor poverty can lessen it. When sisters fought among themselves, Paula brought them back together with the sweetest words. She broke the lustful flesh of young women

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<sup>348</sup> Testard, *Saint Jérôme*, 38.

with many and redoubled fasts, preferring to give pain to their stomachs rather than to their mind. If she noticed some sister more fussy about her dress, with a wrinkled forehead and a sad face she chided this errant one, saying: Cleanliness of body and of clothing is the filthiness of the soul. Never a shameful or a lustful word was to be spoken from a virgin's mouth, by which signs a lecherous soul is revealed: and from a man's outside his inner vices are made clear. Should she note any sister to be talkative, blabber-mouthed or long-winded, or noticed that she took pleasure in arguments, and not wanting to make any changes to her ways after being often warned, she placed her among the lowest sisters and outside the convent, making her pray at the doors of the refectory and take her food apart from the others: so that shame might make right what rebuke had failed to correct. Theft was hated as though a sacrilege. And what was reckoned little or nothing among the world's men was deemed a gravest sin in these monasteries.<sup>349</sup>

In even more detail than in *Audi filia*, we see a clear division of prayer, powerful hierarchical authority and other binding monastic rules that appear to have been at least as strict and restraining as any in sixteenth-century Europe. In this letter we even see an outright refutation of one of the sarcastic points that Erasmus made in his *Life* when he quipped that women's monasteries in Jerome's day were 'far different from the situation of women today, who are shut up behind iron grillwork like untamed beasts'. Erasmus explained: 'I say this not because I condemn the common practice of the age but because I grieve that Christian piety

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<sup>349</sup> Jerome, Letter 108, 19: Dicam et de ordine monasterii, quomodo Sanctorum continentiam in suum verterit lucrum. Seminabat carnalia, ut meteret spiritualia: dabat terrena, ut coelestia tolleret: brevia concedebat, ut pro his aeterna mutaret. Post vivorum monasterium, quod viris tradiderat gubernandum, plures virgines quas e diversis provinciis congregarat, tam nobiles, quam medii, et infimi generis, in tres turmas, monasteriaque divisit: ita duntaxat, ut in opere et in cibo separatae, psalmodis et orationibus iungerentur. Post Alleluia cantatum (quo signo vocabantur ad Collectam) nulli residere licitum erat. Sed prima, seu inter primas veniens, caeterarum operiebatur adventum, pudore et exemplo ad laborem eas provocans, non terrore. Mane, hora Tertia, Sexta, Nona, Vespere, noctis medio, per ordinem Psalterium cantabant. Nec licebat cuiquam sororum ignorare Psalmos, et non de Scripturis sanctis quotidie aliquid discere. Die tantum Dominico ad Ecclesiam procedebant, ex cuius habitabant latere. Et unumquodque agmen matrem propriam sequebatur: atque inde pariter revertentes, instabant operi distributo, et vel sibi, vel caeteris indumenta faciebant. Si qua erat nobilis, non permittebatur de domo sua habere comitem, ne veterum actuum memor, et lascivientis infantiae errorem refricaret antiquum, et crebra confabulatione renovaret. Unus omnium habitus. Linteamine ad tergendas solum manus utebantur. A viris tanta separatio, ut a spadonibus quoque eas seiungeret, ne ullam daret occasionem linguae maledicae, quae sanctos carpere solita est in solatium delinquendi. Si qua vel tardior veniebat ad Psalmos, vel erat in opere pigrior, variis eam modis aggrediebatur. Si erat iracunda, blanditiis, si patiens, correptione; illud Apostoli imitans: 'Quid vultis in virga veniam ad vos, an in spiritu lenitatis et mansuetudinis?' Excepto victu et vestitu, nullam habere quidquam patiebatur, dicente Paulo: 'Habentes victum et vestitum, his contenti sumus'; ne consuetudine plus habendi, praeberet locum avaritiae, quae nullis expletur opibus: et quanto amplius habuerit, plus requirit; et neque copia, neque inopia minuitur. Iurgantes inter se, sermone lenissimo foederabat. Lascivientem adolescentularum carnem crebris et duplicatis frangebatur ieiuniis, malens eis stomachum dolere, quem mentem. Si vidisset aliquam comptiorem, contractione frontis, et vultus tristitia arguebat errantem, dicens: Munditiam corporis atque vestitus, animae esse immunditiam. Et turpe verbum atque lascivum, nunquam de ore virgineo proferendum: quibus signis libidinosus animus ostenditur: et per exteriorem hominem, interioris hominis vitia demonstrantur. Quam linguosam, garrulam, ac procacem, rixisque perspexerat delectari, et saepius commonitam nolle converti, inter ultimas et extra conventum sororum, ad fores triclinii orare faciebat, et separatim cibum capere: ut quam obiurgatio non correxerat, emendaret pudor. Furtum quasi sacrilegium detestabatur. Et quod inter saeculi homines, vel leve putatur, vel nihil, hoc in monasteriis gravissimum dicebat esse delictum.

has deteriorated to the point that the purity of virgins must be secured through the constraint provided by iron bars and prison walls'. When he stated in the next sentence that 'only that devotion is acceptable to Christ which is not hammered out by force but is offered freely and voluntarily', Erasmus suggested that such devotion was commonplace in women's monastic communities in Jerome's day.<sup>350</sup> When we look at Jerome's letter *Si cuncta corporis*, however, Jerome praised Paula's strict separation of women from men and her pointed rebukes of the wayward, and it is clear that even if there were no metal bolts in Paula's monasteries, Jerome looked most kindly on Paula's iron will as well as on the iron discipline which she imposed on her sisters, as she forced richer ones to give up their servants and their eunuchs, monitored closely rich and poor alike and upbraided all when their actions and their failures called for it. In a later letter Jerome vigorously condemned a deacon in Bethlehem for passing love-letters to and later seducing a nun, and throughout his career he argued time and again for strict separation of the sexes, even if he himself was the darling of many noble Roman women and eventually had to leave Rome: under a cloud of scandal that these friendships did not help to clear.<sup>351</sup> Jerome might have gallantly thanked Marcella and Eustochium for the trinkets that they sent to him when they were at Rome.<sup>352</sup> But when it came to Paula's monastic discipline, however, Jerome saw holiness in her strictness. Even if at several moments Jerome pointed out that Paula liked at first to lead by example rather than by force, thereby making a nod to descriptions that we find in Erasmus' *Life*, we cannot take such words out of a context in which we clearly see a rigidly hierarchical monastic order. For Anna Morisi Guerra, this letter's presentation of Paula's monasteries makes one think of 'a

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<sup>350</sup> VH 412-420: Sed idem ferme temporis Hieronymi soror virginis institutum arripuit, instigante Iuliano quodam. Sed multum et hoc dissimile ab harum conditione, quas hodie ferreis cancellis, ceu feras indomitas inclusas tenent. Non quod damnam publicam saeculi consuetudinem, sed quod doleam huc denique delapsam Christianorum pietatem, ut virginum integritas claustris ferreis et repagulis murorum sit extorquenda; cum ea demum religio sit accepta Christo, non quae vi extunditur, sed quae ultro a volentibus offertur.

<sup>351</sup> Jerome, Letter 147, 7. See Wiesen's interpretation of this letter in *Saint Jerome as a Satirist*, 92.

<sup>352</sup> Wiesen, *Saint Jerome as a Satirist*, 76. See Jerome, Letters 33 and 44 for thank-you notes, for rebuttal of criticism see Letter 45, 2.



late fifteenth-century monastery'.<sup>353</sup> We see another contemporary example of Christians' separating the sexes in Augustine's church at Hippo, where 'dedicated virgins would have been screened by a balustrade of pure white marble'.<sup>354</sup> According to Peter Brown, 'the congregation plainly wanted to see such a visible talisman of sanctity', and other evidence from Augustine's writings from Hippo point to strict monastic regimes.<sup>355</sup> In these and in other contemporary sources, we see evidence that early Christian monasticism and monasteries, at the very least in several important examples, were almost opposite to the presentation in Erasmus' *Life* and in his commentaries for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.

Given the clear differences between what we find written about early Christian monastic life in Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* and in Jerome's letters, we might expect to see some detailed remarks about early Christian monastic institutions in Erasmus' commentaries on the above letters. We find very few of these, however, and it seems that in his treatment of early Christian monasticism, Erasmus asserted rather than explained throughout the 1516 *Edition*. To take one example from *Audi filia*, a passage on the *Coenobites* and on monasticism, Erasmus' comments were of limited philological interest. Notwithstanding the great differences between the monasticism presented in Erasmus' *Life* and that presented in Jerome's *Audi filia*, Erasmus limited his *scholia* to a few remarks explaining the Greek words behind the names of the *Coenobites* and of the *Anchorites*:

Coenobites.) κοινὸς means common, βίος means life or lived They say that this word comes from Pythagoras, who said: All things are common to friends. They called this life κοινόβιον according to Gellius. Anachorites.) ἀναχωρεῖν means to withdraw.<sup>356</sup>

<sup>353</sup> Morisi Guerra, 'Leggenda', 31.

<sup>354</sup> Brown, *Augustine*, 249.

<sup>355</sup> Brown, *Augustine*, 409.

<sup>356</sup> See the *scholion* beginning *Coenobitae* and *Anachoritae* to *Audi filia* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 61v: Coenobitae.) κοινὸς communis, βίος vita sive victus. Id a Pythagora fluxisse tradunt, cuius est illud: Amicorum communia esse omnia. Hanc vitam κοινόβιον appellabant teste Gellio. Anachoritae.) ἀναχωρεῖν secedere.

In his *scholia* to *Si cuncta corporis*, Erasmus altogether ignored the section of the letter in which Jerome treated early monastic institutions. Perhaps this silence would not be so remarkable had not Erasmus put forward such a charged view of monasticism in his *Life*. But he did, even when much evidence in Jerome's letters contradicted his view. Erasmus did not even look at this evidence in his commentaries, much less treat it seriously or 'critically'.

In his commentaries Erasmus did, however, treat more closely Jerome's counsel to the Gallic monk Rusticus in his letter *Nihil Christiano felicius*. In this letter Jerome tried to explain to the young Rusticus how best to pursue a true and worthy monastic life. Erasmus did not bring up anything especially controversial in his *scholia* to this letter, but immediately below them we find Erasmus' polemical *antidotum* that is, to my knowledge, the longest treatment of monasticism in his commentaries for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. In this case Erasmus used content from the letter *Nihil Christiano felicius* in order to uphold a vision of early Christian monasticism that is more or less like what we find in the *Life*:

Let no one be offended that in this letter, as in others, Saint Jerome teaches nothing of those things that are now required of monks. He allows the possession of private property, even if only a little. He allows one to live with his mother or with his sister: and last with whatever men and women he wishes, so long as he flee suspect and dangerous relationships. Jerome exhorts, but does not command, that if Rusticus wished to live abroad, he do so in a community of many and under the rule of some father rather than alone under his own rule. Surely there is no mention of monasteries or of the form, the colour or the material of clothing. Jerome only wanted him to be dressed in such a way that he show neither hypocrisy with his filthiness nor pride with his cleanliness. Of those three vows, that they call solemn, there is not a word. He praises in this letter the study of eloquence and remarks that for the sake of letters he left for far-away lands. But we must remember what is clear from his writings; namely, that in Jerome's time there was not yet that type of monk that we see in our day: and would that the world had so many pious monks and it has multitudes of them...For in those times monks were nothing else than those that professed of stricter contempt of the world, but nonetheless they obeyed their bishop as did others and undertook the clerical duties as did others. Indeed, back then monks were not forbidden to have their own possessions, as Augustine himself attests in his book on heresies to Quodvultdeus: 'They arrogantly take for themselves the name of Apostles,' he says, 'because they do not take into their company men with wives, but rather the many monks and many religious having their own possessions who belong to the Church.' Likewise in his rule for clerics Augustine forbids that anyone's habit be remarkable and enjoins that they not seek to please with their clothing, but rather with their behaviour; that is, if they wish to seem better to others, they should not seek to do this with the new colour or with the beauty of their clothing, but rather by the uprightness of their lives. It is not then surprising that Jerome says nothing of these things which were not yet instituted. And I know not whether or not it would be better for the Christian Church if there were fewer monasteries, the greater part of which we see fallen into ways not very religious, and if there were the same cult, prayers and

way of life for all, and last if there were as little servitude and ceremony, which belong more to Jews than to Christians and can make one superstitious, whereas they cannot make one pious.<sup>357</sup>

In the above letters beginning *Audi filia* and *Si cuncta corporis* we have already seen enough evidence to let us reasonably doubt Erasmus' presentation of early Christian monastic life in this *antidotus*. When we turn to look at what is actually written in *Nihil Christiano felicius*, we see that in this *antidotus* Erasmus misled his reader on many fronts and cannot have been unaware of what he was doing.

It is worth looking closely at Jerome's letter beginning *Nihil Christiano felicius* in order to refute point-by-point much of what we find in the above *antidotus*. To begin, let us take Erasmus' claim that Jerome 'allowed' monks to own private property and to live with one's mother or sister. This is not true. Jerome said nothing at all about sisters and only remarked that Rusticus might see his mother from time to time under certain conditions: 'See your mother in such a way that you not be forced by her to see other women...whose faces

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<sup>357</sup> See Appendix CXVIII-CXIX for Erasmus' *antidotus* to Jerome, Letter 125 (1516 *Edition I*, f. 20r): Ne quem illud offendat, quod in hac epistola, sicuti nec in superioribus, divum Hieronymus nihil eorum praecipit, quae his temporibus a monachis exiguntur. Permittit possessionem rei familiaris, modo sit moderata. Permittit vitam agere cum matre, cum sorore: denique cum quibuslibet viris aut mulieribus, modo fugiat suspectam ac periculosam consuetudinem. Hortatur, non exigit, ut si malit peregre vivere, in contubernio multorum, patris alicuius arbitrio vivat, potius quam solus suo. De monasterio certo, de figura, aut colore, aut materia vestis, nulla usquam mentio. Tantum eiusmodi vestitum vult esse, ut nec sordibus hypocrisis, nec nitore fastum prae se ferat. Iam de tribus illis votis, quae vocant solennia, ne verbum quidem ullum. Laudat in hoc aeloquentiae studium, quodquam litterarum gratia, procul semotas adierit regiones. Sed meminisse debemus, id quod palam liquet ex huius scriptis, aetate Hieronymi nondum fuisse hoc monachorum genus, cuiusmodi nostra tempestate videmus, quos omnes utinam tam pios haberet mundus, quam habet multos, et ita sanctimonia caeteris antecellentes, ut ornatu differunt. Nam illis temporibus monachi nihil aliud erant, quam vita severiori mundi contemptum profitentes, nihilominus episcopo suo parebant sicut caeteri, et clericorum munere fungebantur, sicut et caeteri. Porro monachis olim non fuisse interdictam rerum suarum possessionem, vel Augustinus est testis, in libro de haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum, cuius haec sunt verba: 'Apostolici,' inquit, 'qui se isto nomine arrogantissime vocaverunt, eo quod in suam communionem non reciperent utentes coniugibus, et res proprias possidentes, quales habet catholica ecclesia, et monachos et clericos plurimos.' Idem in regula suorum clericorum, prohibet, ne fit notabilis illorum habitus, nec vestibus affectent placere, sed moribus: hoc est, si meliores velint videri caeteris, non id agant novo colore, aut forma vestis, sed probitate vitae. Non igitur mirum, si nihil de his meminerit Hieronymus, quae nondum erant instituta. Et haud scio an nunc quoque magis expediret ecclesiae Christianae, si pauciora forent monasteria, quorum magnam partem, ad mores parum religiosos prolapsam videmus: essetque omnium idem cultus, eadem preces, eademque vitae ratio. Postremo quam minimum servitutis ac caeremoniarum: quae magis ad Iudaeos pertinent quam ad Christianos, et superstitiosum facere possunt, pium non possunt.

might burrow into your heart.’<sup>358</sup> To see one’s mother is something granted to almost any Catholic monk today and to many in Erasmus’ lifetime as well. Truth be told, Jerome’s recommendations here might have outdone usual sixteenth-century custom in their strictness. As for private property, in this letter Jerome clearly condemned the practice of monks’ keeping any possessions: ‘If you truly want to be a monk, not merely to seem to be one, care not for your possessions, which you must renounce once you have undertaken this way, but rather for your soul.’<sup>359</sup> Jerome did complain that many bad, wayward monks’ ‘possessions have grown rather than lessened’,<sup>360</sup> but Jerome’s disapproval of this practice is clear when later he suggested strongly that private ownership and riches were the propriety of the regular clergy but not of monks.<sup>361</sup> Although he stated that some monks kept the ‘same servants and the same table’ as they enjoyed in their prior lives, Jerome was *condemning* these monks in this letter, not citing them as examples. When Erasmus used Jerome as a source in order to claim that early monks could keep their possessions after entering the monastic state, he failed to bring up the important point that Jerome had repeatedly and pointedly condemned this practice in *Nihil Christiano felicius*.

In his *antidotus* Erasmus stated that in *Nihil Christiano felicius* there was no mention of monasteries, of the proper cut and make of monks’ habits or of the three solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. He clearly implied that since these things were not mentioned in this letter, they most probably did not exist in Jerome’s day. But Jerome did

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<sup>358</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 7: Matrem ita vide, ne per illam alias videre cogaris, quarum vultus cordi tuo haereant, et tacitum vivat sub pectore vulnus.

<sup>359</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 7: Tu vero si monachus esse vis, non videri, habeto curam, non rei familiaris, cui renuntiando, hoc esse coepisti, sed animae tuae.

<sup>360</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 16: Vidi ego quosdam, qui postquam renuntiavere saeculo, vestimentis duntaxat, et vocis professione, non rebus, nihil de pristina conversatione mutarunt. Res familiaris magis aucta quam imminuta.

<sup>361</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 17: Ecce illi fruuntur suis rebus, ministrant Ecclesiis, adeunt balneas, unguenta non spernunt; et tamen in omnium ore versantur. Ad quod et ante respondi, et nunc breviter respondeo, me in praesenti opusculo non de Clericis disputare, sed monachum instituere.

mention religious habits and hinted at their uniformity in another letter, *Si cuncta corporis*, in which he explained that at Paula's monasteries all women 'wore one habit'.<sup>362</sup> In *Nihil Christiano felicius* itself Jerome did, in fact, mention monasteries, such as when he advised Rusticus: 'The first thing you must do is to decide whether you should live alone or in a monastery.'<sup>363</sup> Later Jerome counselled the young Gaul to get his hands dirty and stated in a less pithy way the idea that we find in Saint Benedict's saying, *orare et laborare* ('pray and work'). Of many possible tasks suited for monastic life, Jerome recommended the practice of keeping beehives, so that Rusticus might learn 'the order of monasteries and a kingdom's discipline in small bodies'.<sup>364</sup> By my count, the word 'monastery' (*monasterium*) comes up nine times in *Nihil Christiano felicius*. Therefore, for Erasmus to write that there was 'surely no mention' of monasteries in this letter is misleading. It is true that Jerome did not, either in this letter or anywhere else to my knowledge, write clearly about guidelines for the cut, the make and the fabric for monks' habits or define outright the three solemn monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. But that Jerome did not write of these things does not mean that they did not exist in individual monasteries. As for a dress-code for monks, in this letter and elsewhere Jerome advised that monks should be somewhat dirty, for 'dirty clothes point to a clean mind',<sup>365</sup> but not so dirty as to attract too much attention. As we have seen, Paula's religious women made 'one habit' for all of her communities, and we might suspect with good reason that these habits closely resembled each other. At all events, Erasmus had no reason to reject out of hand the idea that there was uniformity in the dress of some fourth-century religious communities.<sup>366</sup> Also, although Jerome did not directly point out the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, given the strictly hierarchical monastic structures that

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<sup>362</sup> Jerome, Letter 108, 19: *Unus omnium habitus*.

<sup>363</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 9: *Primumque tractandum est, utrum solus, an cum aliis in monasterio vivere debeas*.

<sup>364</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 11: *Apum fabricare alvearia, ad quas te mittunt Salomonis Proverbia et monasteriorum ordinem, ac regiam disciplinam, in parvis disce corporibus*.

<sup>365</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 7: *Sordidae vestes candidae mentis indicia sint...*

<sup>366</sup> Testard, *Saint Jérôme*, 39.

Jerome promoted in this letter and whenever he treated monasteries and monks, we might reasonably expect such communities to have required some kind of ‘vows’ from their members. At the very least, drawing from what we see in Jerome’s letters, we can say with sureness that Jerome praised few virtues so unreservedly as he praised poverty, chastity and obedience. To imply, as Erasmus strongly does in this *antidotus*, that such vows did not exist because Jerome never mentioned or defined them outright is not convincing. At the end of the day, did Erasmus believe that religious vows needed a canon lawyer in order to exist?

Last, in this *antidotus* Erasmus wrote, ‘Jerome exhorts, but does not command’ that Rusticus live ‘in a community of many and under the rule of some father rather than alone under his own rule’. It ought not to surprise us that Jerome did not ‘command’ Rusticus, son of the bishop Bonosus and himself later Bishop of Narbonne, because he had no authority to do so. But Jerome could have hardly ‘exhorted’ his charge to live in a monastic community more strongly than he did in this letter, in which he clearly set monastic life in community above the life of hermits.<sup>367</sup> Jerome wrote to Rusticus of his vocation:

The first thing to consider is whether or not you ought to live by yourself or in a monastery. It would please me that you have the society of saintly men and not teach yourself; for if you enter the road which you do not know without a guide, forthwith you will fall away somewhere and open yourself to error, walking more or less than is needed...What then? Do I condemn the solitary life? Not at all, for indeed I have often praised it. But from the monasteries' sparring I want to see soldiers come out that do not fear the desert's harshness...who have become last of all, so that they be made first of all, whom neither satiety nor hunger has overcome, who take their pleasure in poverty; whose clothing, face and gait are lessons of virtue.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> P. Antin, ‘Le monachisme selon saint Jérôme’ in *Mélanges Bénédictines* (Paris: Éditions de Fontenelle, 1947), 79-80.

<sup>368</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 9: Primumque tractandum est, utrum solus, an cum aliis in monasterio vivere debeas. Mihi quidem placet, ut habeas sanctorum contubernium, nec ipse te doceas, et absque ductore ingrediaris viam, quam nunquam ingressus es, statimque tibi in partem alteram declinandum sit, et errori pateas, plusque aut minus ambules, quam necesse est; ne aut currens lasseris, aut moram faciens, obdormias. In solitudine cito subrepat superbia: et si parumper ieiunaverit, hominemque non viderit, putat se alicuius esse momenti: oblitusque sui, unde, et quo venerit, intus corde, lingua foris vagatur. Iudicat, contra Apostoli voluntatem, alienos servos: quo gula voluerit, porrigit manum: dormit quantum voluerit: nullum veretur, facit quod voluerit, omnes inferiores se putat, crebriusque in urbibus, quam in cellula est: et inter fratres simulat verecundiam, qui platearum turbis colliditur. Quid igitur? Solitariam vitam reprehendimus? Minime: quippe quam saepe laudavimus. Sed de ludo monasteriorum, huiuscemodi volumus egredi milites, quos eremi dura rudimenta non terreant: qui specimen conversationis suae multo tempore dederint: qui omnium fuerint

But of the many passages in which Jerome ‘exhorted’ his reader to undertake the monastic way, the longest and most powerful could not go more against Erasmus’ vision of early Christian monastic life as he expressed it in his *Life* and in the above *antidotus*, claiming all the while for his source the selfsame Jerome who wrote the below advice to Rusticus:

No art is learnt without a master. Even dumb animals and herds of wild beasts follow their own leaders. There are princes among bees: cranes follow one [in the shape of the letter ‘v’]. There is one emperor: there is one judge for each province. When Rome was founded it could not have two brothers as kings and was given over to fratricide. In Rebecca’s womb Jacob and Esau fought. There are single bishops of the Church, single Archpriests, single Archdeacons: and the whole ecclesiastical order is subject to its own rulers. In a ship there is one captain: in one house there is one Lord: no matter how great the army, it awaits one man’s command. And so that I not tire you by repeating many things, through all these things my oration tends to this end; that I teach you that you ought not to act according to your own judgement but rather to live in a monastery under the discipline of one Father and under a group of many men, so that from the one you learn humility, from the other patience: the former will teach you silence, the latter gentleness. You will not do what you list but will eat what you are told to eat, you will wear what you are given, you will finish the task given you, you will obey he whom you do not want to obey, you will go to bed tired, you will sleep on your feet, and you will be forced to wake up after but little sleep. You will sing the Psalms at your turn... You will serve your brothers, you will wash guests’ feet; you will endure insults with silence, you will fear the monastery’s head as a lord and love him as a parent. Whatever he commands you will deem something helpful to you, nor will you judge the opinions of your elders, you whose duty is to obey and to fulfil what things are commanded to you... Busy with such tasks, with no empty thoughts, while you move from one task to another, and as work follows work, you will only keep in mind what you are being forced to do.<sup>369</sup>

From this letter it is clear that for Jerome, ‘the good monk should not live alone’. His description of monastic life even hinted at some kind of monastic ‘rule’ already being

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minimi, ut primi omnium fierent: quos nec esuries aliquando, nec saturitas superavit: qui paupertate laetantur: quorum habitus, sermo, vultus, incessus, doctrina virtutum est: qui nesciunt secundum quosdam ineptos homines, daemonum pugnantium contra se portenta confingere, ut apud imperitos, et vulgi homines miraculum sui faciant, et exinde lucra sectentur.

<sup>369</sup> Jerome, Letter 125, 15: Nulla ars absque magistro discitur. Etiam muta animalia, et ferarum greges, ductores sequuntur suos. In apibus principes sunt: grues unam sequuntur ordine litterato. Imperator unus: ludex unus provinciae. Roma ut condita est, duos fratres simul habere reges non potuit, et parricidio dedicatur. In Rebecca utero, Esau, et Iacob bella gesserunt. Singuli Ecclesiarum Episcopi, singuli Archipresbyteri, singuli Archidiaconi: et omnis ordo Ecclesiasticus suis rectoribus nititur. In navi unus gubernator: in domo unus Dominus: in quamvis grandi exercitu, unius signum expectatur. Et ne plura replicando fastidium legenti faciam, per haec omnia ad illud tendit oratio; ut doceam te, non tuo arbitrio dimittendum, sed vivere debere in monasterio sub unius disciplina Patris, consortioque multorum, ut ab alio discas humilitatem, ab alio patientiam: hic te silentium, ille doceat mansuetudinem. Non facias quod vis, comedas quod iuberis, vestiare quod acceperis, operis tui pensum persolvas, subiiciaris cui non vis, lassus ad stratum venias, ambulansque dormites, et necdum expleto somno, surgere compellaris. Dicas Psalmum in ordine tuo; in quo non dulcedo vocis, sed mentis affectus quaeritur, dicente Apostolo: Psallam spiritu, psallam et mente: Et, Cantantes in cordibus vestris Domino. Legerat enim esse praeceptum, Psallite sapienter. Servias fratribus, hospitum laves pedes; passus iniuriam taceas; Praepositum monasterii timeas ut dominum, diligas ut parentem. Credas tibi salutare quicquid ille praeceperit; nec de maiorum sententia iudices, cuius officii est obedire, et implere quae iussa sunt, dicente Moyse: ‘Audi Israel, et tace.’ Tantis negotiis occupatus, nullis vacabis cogitationibus, et dum ab alio transis ad aliud, opusque succedit operi, illud solum mente tenebis, quod agere compelleris.

practiced and imposed in contemporary monasteries, even if it had not yet been formally written and accepted.<sup>370</sup> In order to uphold his own vision of monasticism that especially prized continence, poverty and silence, Peter Abelard later cited this passage from *Nihil Christiano felicius* in his letter to Heloise on the *Institutio seu regula sanctimonialium* (*Institution or Rule of Consecrated Religious*).<sup>371</sup> Even though their ideas about monastic life were quite different, for Abelard as for Erasmus, Jerome was ‘the greatest doctor of the Church and the honour of the monastic profession’.<sup>372</sup> Abelard’s interpretation of *Nihil Christiano felicius*, however, rings truer. From looking back at Erasmus’ *antidotus* to this letter in light of the above excerpt from it, we must conclude that both in this *Life of Jerome* and in his commentaries for the 1516 *Jerome Edition*, Erasmus put forward his vision of early monasticism in full awareness that even the very sources he cited, to say nothing of many others, actually made a strong case against this vision. Although his belief that Erasmus was obsessed with attacking monasticism falls wide of the mark, Emile Telle is one of few historians to have pointed out Erasmus’ questionable use of trustworthy late-Antique sources in order to forward his vision of monasticism in the *Life*: ‘In the name of the truth, Erasmus twisted the sense of the letters to Eustochium, Marcella, Rusticus and Paulinus which were then, one might say, stock letters of monasticism for many monks and laymen’. According to Telle, Erasmus did this in order to show that ‘Jerome’s monasticism, the true and authentic monasticism, was altogether foreign to that of the sixteenth century’.<sup>373</sup>

The early Christian monasticism portrayed in Erasmus’ *Life* and in his commentaries on Jerome’s letters is much more what Erasmus wanted to believe, and wanted his readers to

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<sup>370</sup> Telle, *Septième sacrement*, 65-66.

<sup>371</sup> See Peter Abelard, Letter 8 (from Peter to Heloise) in PL 178, C 1886.

<sup>372</sup> See Abelard in PL 178, 310 C: Maximus Ecclesiae doctor et monasticae professionis honor Hieronymus, qui nos ad amorem litterarum adhortans, ait: ‘Ama scientiam litterarum, et carnis vitia non amabis, quantum laborem et expensas in doctrina earum consumpserit eius quoque testimonio didicimus.’

<sup>373</sup> Telle, *Septième sacrement*, 135.



believe, than what he saw and what we can see in the very sources from which he claimed to have woven his story. Drawing from three different letters that treat the ‘institution’ of monkhood, Erasmus did more than merely ‘twist’ or ‘slant’ the sources in order to further his own rhetorical goals. Instead, when it came to monasticism, Erasmus’ rhetorical goals overrode Jerome’s own testimony. Although we do see examples of similar practice when we compare the writings of Erasmus and of Jerome on specific matters of Christian life and discipline, on no matter in the 1516 *Jerome Edition* did Erasmus show so little faithfulness to Jerome’s writings and stray so far from the sources as when writing about monasticism.<sup>374</sup>

It bears pointing out that in his presentation of early monasticism, Erasmus’ intellectual debt to Lorenzo Valla was unmistakable. The superiority of a freer religious life without the vows and the obligations that, according to Erasmus, weighed so heavily on Renaissance monks such as himself, is an idea that Valla developed at great length in his *De professione religiosorum* (*On the Profession of Religious*). In this work Valla stated that he would like to call the ‘religious’ of his day a ‘sect’ if he would not thereby be misunderstood,<sup>375</sup> and he pointedly asked why monks promised to men the obedience that they owed to God alone and that they had already promised Him at baptism.<sup>376</sup> Valla also stated that monks’ giving up their right of dressing, eating, going, acting, lying down, sleeping, waking and speaking according to their own wishes were constraints and rules ‘of no moment whatsoever’.<sup>377</sup> Much as Erasmus claimed that monkhood in Jerome’s day was

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<sup>374</sup> See Telle, *Septième sacrement*, 77.

<sup>375</sup> See Valla’s *De Professione Religiosorum* in Eugenio Garin, ed. *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento* (Milano: R. Ricciardi, 1952), 566: Hoc de quo miraris, quod sectam malui dicere quam religionem, non modo venustatis a me habit est ratio, sed etiam necessitatis.

<sup>376</sup> Valla in *Prosatori latini*, 570: Nonne ante promiseras Deo, dum baptisate initiatus es, te honeste sancteque victurum, omnibus mandatis eius oboedientem futurum? Quid sibi vult secunda promissio? Quid hominibus spondes quod Deo spoponderas? Quomodo potes donare quod ante donaveras?

<sup>377</sup> Valla in *Prosatori latini*, 570: Frater: Non retracto ego sponsionem meam, nec homini do quod Deo dederam, nec iterum Deo promitto, quod ante promiseram. Sed in quibuscumque etiam Deo serviens arbitrium habebam, ut vestiendi, vescendi, eundi, agendi, cubandi, dormiendi, vigilandi, postremo loquendi,

for those ‘to whose hearts liberty was most dear’, Valla claimed that ‘neither the Apostles, nor the martyrs nor any other others thought to use obligation rather than liberty’ in order to foster and to uphold a truly religious life in themselves and in others.<sup>378</sup> Valla, Papal secretary and canon of Saint John Lateran, was no Protestant-in-waiting.<sup>379</sup> Instead, we can understand these writings as examples, albeit extreme, of ongoing religious discussion among fifteenth-century Italian humanists throughout the peninsula, and perforce at the Papal Court.<sup>380</sup> Erasmus’ presentation of early Christian monastic life was heir to such discussion and reproduced many of Valla’s arguments in the particular case of Jerome. Erasmus tried to make of Jerome, the ‘foremost monastic doctor’, an example that contrasted markedly with the ways and the waywardness of many sixteenth-century monks and religious, whose ‘tyranny’ he decried.<sup>381</sup> All told, it is hard not to share Telle’s judgement that in his description of early monasticism, Erasmus indulged in ‘humanist daydreams’.<sup>382</sup> Notwithstanding overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Erasmus wanted to see in Jerome’s writings his own ideal monastic communities in which scholarship, leisure and freedom were prized above all else. Other contemporary humanists shared this ‘daydream’. When the well-known Venetian scholar Tommaso Giustiniani began living with the Camaldolese order in 1510, he was looking for quiet, scholarly leisure, or *otium*, without the vows and obligations

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horum omnium libertatem et, ut dixi, arbitrium a me in alterum transcribo: quod quantae patientiae sit, qui experti sunt norunt, tu tamen coniectura colligere potes. Laurentius: Ista tibi grandia quaedam et intolerabilia videntur, mihi vero nullius esse momenti.

<sup>378</sup> Valla in *Prosatori latini*, 580: Ideoque neque apostoli neque martyres neque alii maxime necessitate magis quam libertate sibi utendum putaverunt.

<sup>379</sup> See John D’Amico, ‘*De dignitate et excellentia Curiae Romanae*: Humanism and the Papal Curia’, in *Umanesimo a Roma nel Quattrocento*, eds. Paolo Brezzi and Maristella de Panizza Lorch (Roma: Istituto di Studi Romani; New York: Barnard College, Columbia University, 1981), 87. See also Paul Oskar Kristeller, ‘La cultura umanistica a Roma nel Quattrocento’ in *Umanesimo a Roma nel Quattrocento*, 334.

<sup>380</sup> D’Amico, ‘*De dignitate*’, 93.

<sup>381</sup> Antin, ‘Le monachisme’, 72.

<sup>382</sup> Telle, *Septième sacrement*, 75-76.

of formal religious life.<sup>383</sup> Once he did take formal religious vows he, like Erasmus, came to regret his lost freedoms.<sup>384</sup>

If there were groups in early Christianity that better fit the ideals which Erasmus put forward in the *Life of Jerome*, they were probably not the monastic communities in the Holy Land under Jerome's influence. To my knowledge there was, however, one community that seemed to conform somewhat to Erasmus' ideal: Augustine's *Servi Dei* in Carthage, before he became Bishop of Hippo. Although Augustine set up a rigid monastic regime in Hippo when serving as the city's bishop,<sup>385</sup> the existence of the *Servi Dei* does point to the possibility of freer religious communities in the fourth-century Church. From the evidence that Erasmus cited in his *Life*, however, we see in Jerome the champion of strict, formalized and hierarchical monastic arrangements – even if, according to Antin, it seems that in his own life as a monk and priest, Jerome 'never obeyed anyone but himself'.<sup>386</sup> In the seventeenth chapter of his *Speculum Historiale* (*Historical Mirror*) the Dominican scholar Vincent de Beauvais (c.1190-c.1260) wrote a life of Jerome and followed it with a sizeable selection of texts drawn from over twenty-five of Jerome's letters and polemic works, including long citations from these works in order to defend traditional ideas of monastic discipline and spirituality. Using the same works that Erasmus cited in support of his idealized portrait of early monasticism, Vincent defended 'Mediaeval' monasticism and its priorities. Although Vincent did include many miraculous tales in his own life of Jerome, when it came to interpreting Jerome's writings about monasticism, he drew nearer to the 'factual truth' about Jerome's life than Erasmus, who instead presented a 'rhetorical truth' that he read into, and forced onto, Jerome's works.

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<sup>383</sup> Cécile Caby, 'L'humanisme au service de l'observance', 143.

<sup>384</sup> Caby, 'L'humanisme au service de l'observance', 46.

<sup>385</sup> Brown, *Augustine*, 132.

<sup>386</sup> Antin, 'Le monachisme', 71-113.

## PART I: CHAPTER V

### JEROME'S MIRACLES AND JEROME, 'THE HAMMER OF HERETICS'

In Jerome's letter *Saepe a me*, addressed to his friend Innocentius, he told the story of a Christian woman in Vercella, today's Vercelli in Piedmont, accused of adultery but miraculously saved from an executioner's sword and from a blood-thirsty imperial prefect. In his commentaries to this letter, Erasmus put his *argumentum* and his *scholia* before the letter's text. With the *argumentum* he framed *Saepe a me* thus:

In Vercella, some husband accused his blameless wife of adultery: she was thrown in prison along with the young man whom the husband accused, and they were duly tortured. The woman steadfastly denied the crime. Condemned, both were led to their executions: the young man was killed. The woman, struck time and again, at last seemed to die when the blade of a sword was at last brought to her neck. Her body, once taken away, came back to life. After having looked into this attempted execution, Evagrius with his pleadings was able to secure her liberty from the emperor. Jerome toyed [*lusit*] in his letter with the craft of writing history: and his style now languishing for want of use he renewed by dint of this little exercise.<sup>387</sup>

Before readers could come to the text, Erasmus wished them to believe that this letter was not meant to tell historical truth but rather to help Jerome to overcome an impoverished style (or perhaps 'writer's block') brought on by too much time spent learning languages and doing penance in the Syrian desert. Had Erasmus not fierily exclaimed in the beginning paragraphs of his *Life of Jerome* that 'trustworthiness' (*fides*) was 'what is most needed in an historian', especially an historian of the saints? Had he not remarked, citing Augustine for his authority, that to write untrue things about the saints, even for the best of reasons, was not to write their

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<sup>387</sup> See the *argumentum* to the letter *Saepe a me* in 1516 *Edition I*, f. 106r: Vercellae, maritus quidam uxorem innoxiam detulerat adulterii: conicitur in carcerem una cum iuvene, quem accusarat maritus, admoventur tormenta. Iuvenis impatiens, confessus est, quod non admiserat. Mulier constanter negavit. uterque damnatus ducitur ad supplicium: ille occiditur. Haec sapies icta vixit, demum admoto iugulo mucrone, visa est mori. Sublatum cadaver revixit. Huic cum ad supplicium requireretur Evagrius, ab imperatore libertatem suis precibus impetravit. Lusit in hac epistola Hieronymus artificio scribendae historiae: et stilum iam scribendi desuetudine torpescentem, hac exercitatiuncula renovavit.

lives but rather ‘to debase them’? Yet, Erasmus, in his highly visible *argumentum* to *Saepe a me*, framed and summarized the letter’s contents with the explanation that Jerome was ‘toying with the craft of writing history’ and, moreover, had most probably indulged in untruths about saints and potential martyrs for the sake of exercising his writing style. This interpretation is not only at odds with the principles of history-writing that Erasmus staked out in his *Life*, but no less with what Jerome actually wrote in this letter to Innocentius.

Jerome began *Saepe a me* by acknowledging that his ease with stylus and papyrus had waned in the desert, noting that although Innocentius had often asked him not to ‘keep quiet about that miracle that happened in our times’, his few chances to write had ‘dried up his earlier eloquence’.<sup>388</sup> Spurred on, nonetheless, by Innocentius’ repeated requests, Jerome promised to write the story of this miracle while asking forgiveness for any faults in his style.<sup>389</sup> These introductory remarks aside, in which we do see rhetorical flourish, Jerome did not show any hint that this powerful letter was to be taken little as a mere exercise of wit. His description of the ordeal of the woman struck seven times was moving and included lengthy and rousing dialogue. Jerome wrote of her trial:

And this woman truly stronger than her sex, when the rack had already stretched her body and chains held her dirty hands behind her back in the prison’s filth, turned her eyes, which her torturer could not bind, to heaven and cried out with tears: ‘You, she said, are my witness Lord Jesus, from whom nothing is hidden, who is the trier of reins and of hearts, that I do not so much wish to deny my crime, so as not to die, but that I do not want to lie, so that I do not sin. And you, most miserable man, if you are so eager to kill, why do you kill two innocent people? Indeed I want to die, I want to leave this hateful body, but not as an adulteress. Do your worst, bravely I shall submit to the shining sword’s blade, but I shall take my innocence with me. He does not die, who dies in order to live.’<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> Jerome, Letter 1, 1: *Saepe a me*, Innocenti carissime, postulasti, ut de eius miraculo rei, quae in nostram aetatem inciderat, non tacerem. Cumque ego id verecunde et vere, ut nunc experior, negarem meque adsequi posse diffiderem, sive quia omnis humanus sermo inferior esset laude caelesti, sive quia otium quasi quaedam ingenii robigo parvulam licet facultatem pristini siccasset eloquii, tu e contrario adserebas in dei rebus non possibilitatem inspicere debere, sed animum, neque eum posse verba deficere, qui credidisset in verbo.

<sup>389</sup> Jerome, Letter 1, 2.

<sup>390</sup> Jerome, Letter 1, 3: At vero mulier sexu fortior suo, cum eculeus corpus extenderet et sordidas paedore carceris manus post tergum vincula cohiberent, oculis, quos tantum tortor alligare non poterat, suspexit ad caelum et volutis per ora lacrimis: ‘Tu,’ inquit, testis, domine Iesu, cui occultum nihil est, qui es scrutator renis et cordis, non ideo me negare velle, ne peream, sed ideo mentiri nolle, ne peccem. At tu, miserrime homo, si interire festinas, cur duos interimis innocentes? Equidem et ipsa cupio mori, cupio invisum hoc corpus exuere,

Later this would-be martyr, after undergoing much torture, still cried out ‘with one voice: strike me, burn me, tear me; I did not do it. If you do not believe my words, the day will come that will duly clear me of this crime; I shall have my judge’.<sup>391</sup> After the executioner’s sword had stricken her several times without issue and he continued to hack at her with all his might, ‘a brooch that held together his cloak fell to the ground, and unmindful of this, while he was brandishing his sword over the wound, the woman said, “Look, gold has fallen from your shoulder. Pick up what you have gained with so much work, so that it not be lost”’.<sup>392</sup> At this point Jerome asked his readers: ‘What is this bravery ? She does not fear her coming death, stricken she rejoices, her executioner pales; her eyes, not seeing the sword, notice the brooch and, were it not enough that she was not afraid of death, she did a good deed for her persecutor.’<sup>393</sup> Jerome then compared this early Christian saint with Old Testament examples:

Here I see the example of the three young men, who while in the cold balls of flames sang out hymns for their cries, about whose trousers and holy heads of hair the fire played harmlessly. Here the example of blessed Daniel is called to mind, whom lions caressed with their tails while their mouths shirked from touching him. Now Susannah, brave in faith, comes to the minds of all, she that, condemned by an unrighteous judge, was saved by a young man filled with the Holy Ghost. Behold in these two cases the Lord’s mercy was not unlike: Susannah was freed by a judge, so that she not go to the sword, whereas this condemned woman was absolved by the sword itself.<sup>394</sup>

Jerome finished his story by telling us how the woman was at last wounded and, thought dead, was afterwards found to be alive by the clergy tasked with burying her. According to

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sed non quasi adultera. Praesto iugulum, micantem intrepida excipio mucronem, innocentiam tantum mecum feram. non moritur, quisquis victurus occiditur.’

<sup>391</sup> Jerome, Letter 1, 6: Una interim vox: ‘Caede, ure, lacera; non feci. Si dictis tollitur fides, veniet dies, quae hoc crimen diligenter excutiat; habebo iudicem meum.’

<sup>392</sup> Jerome, Letter 1, 7: Itaque furens et anhelus lictor paludamento in cervicem retorto, dum totas expedit vires, fibulam, quae chlamydis mordebat oras, in humum excussit ignarusque rei ensem librat in vulnus et ‘en tibi’, ait mulier, ‘ex umero aurum ruit. Collige multo quaesitum labore, ne pereat.’

<sup>393</sup> Jerome, Letter 1, 8: Rogo, quae est ista securitas? Inpendentem non timet mortem, laetatur percussa, carnifex pallet; oculi gladium non videntes tantum fibulam vident et, ne parum esset, quod non formidabat interitum, praestabat beneficium saevienti.

<sup>394</sup> Jerome, Letter 1, 9: Huc, huc mihi trium exempla puerorum, qui inter frigidos flammarum globos hymnos edidere pro fletibus, circa quorum sarabara sanctamque caesariem innoxium lusit incendium. Huc beati Danielis revocetur historia, iuxta quem adulantibus caudis praedam suam leonum ora timuerunt. Nunc Susanna nobilis fide mentes omnium subeat, quae iniquo damnata iudicio sancto spiritu puerum replente servata est. Ecce non dispar in utraque misericordia Domini: illa liberata per iudicem, ne iret ad gladium, haec a iudice damnata absoluta per gladium est.

Jerome, she was then sped away from her persecutors and later cleared of her charges by the Emperor through the offices of the bishop Evagrius, Jerome's friend.

To my knowledge, nowhere in this letter did Jerome give the impression that he wrote it for sport or that he did not want his readers to believe it to be the true story of a miracle and of a saint. Erasmus wrote this letter off, as he did many of Jerome's other letters and accounts, with the dismissive comment that the learned saint was 'playing' (*ludere*) in it. Later interpreters of Jerome's writings, however, are more willing to accept that Jerome wrote *Saepe a me* in order to convince readers that the story which he told in it was true. For example, Jerome's foremost twentieth-century biographer, Ferdinand Cavallera, does not share Erasmus' view that Jerome's was merely 'toying' in *Saepe a me*, but rather emphasizes that Jerome's story was meant to be taken seriously as a 'true story'.<sup>395</sup> To tell a true story and to offer a model for Christians, and especially for Christian women, was also the intention of the publishers of a 1504 edition from Leipzig that included only the letter *Saepe a me*.<sup>396</sup> In his *scholia* to this letter, Erasmus brought up many historical and literary details but did not question the story's basic truth as clearly as in his *argumentum*. We do see a few interesting remarks on early Christian history in the *scholia*, such as where Erasmus noted that 'you will see that among the old Christians, [the Pope] was not called the highest, but the Roman bishop'.<sup>397</sup> In another *scholion* Erasmus attacked sixteenth-century Europe's criminal codes by comparing them to those of Antiquity. In the latter theft was never a capital punishment, whereas adultery was, and Erasmus clearly found the ancients' ways of doing

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<sup>395</sup> Ferdinand Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme: sa vie et son œuvre*, volume 1 (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1922), 27. Other biographers of Jerome do not take seriously this story. For more discussion of this letter see *The Letters of Saint Jerome*, volume I, eds. Thomas Cornerford Lawler and Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Newman Press, 1963), 187.

<sup>396</sup> See title-page of 1504 *Saepe a me*: Beatissimi Hieronymi de muliere septies percussa Epistola. Tetrastichon Magistri Gregorii Laticephai de Koniz ad Lectorem. Qui vis quem fuerit constanti femina corde/Noscere: dum gladios, dum neque fata timet/Hieronymi relegas quae promit epistola divi/Dices sidero est femina digna polo.

<sup>397</sup> See the *scholion* to the letter *Saepe a me* beginning *Romanum episcopum* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 106v: Vides apud veteres non appellari summum, sed Romanum. I saw this comment blacked out in the 1516 Jerome *Edition* found at the Erasmus Reading Room of Rotterdam's City Library.

things morally superior to the laws of sixteenth-century Europe.<sup>398</sup> Notwithstanding the interest of these comments about the early Church that had obvious implications for the sixteenth-century, nowhere in his commentaries did Erasmus try to prove the assertions that he made in the *argumentum* to *Saepe a me*. Erasmus' commentaries to this letter tell us something important about his larger editorial undertaking for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. As he explained away the powerful story of a Christian miracle by claiming that Jerome was writing untruths in order to brush up a languishing literary style, we see something that we have already seen and which we shall continue to see in the 1516 *Edition*: a difference, and often a remarkable difference, between Erasmus' analysis of Jerome and what we find in Jerome's writings. In his commentaries to Jerome's letters, when making pointed or 'controversial' observations and conclusions about Jerome, about his scholarship and about his times, Erasmus' claims were often based on little more than assertion and on his authority as a scholar rather than on the sound or 'critical' textual and historical analysis of which he was surely capable.

Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* has often been called 'critical history' because of how it treats the miraculous. It is indeed remarkable that Erasmus did not include in his *Life* any real treatment of the stories about Jerome's miracles which had become well-known in his day and whose trappings, such as the lion, the ass and the three bandits, are everywhere to be seen in contemporary plastic arts. What is more, the first paragraph of his *Life* showed a clear slant against the 'miraculous', as Erasmus heaped scorn on the 'noble lies' with which 'men of good judgement in the past embellished with miraculous tales themes they wished to commend with special emphasis to the public, as, for instance, the worship of the gods, the

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<sup>398</sup> See the *scholion* to *Saepe a me* beginning *Quondam mulierculam* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 106r: Ex hoc loco palam apparet adhuc aetate divi Hieronymi, adulterium capite solere puniri. Nunc magnatum lusus est. Et saevitur passim in miseros fures. Cum nec Draconis leges, nec Romanae, nec ullae gentilium, nec ipse Mosaicae legem simplex furtum supplicio capitis vindicaverint. Sed avaritia nostra facit, ut usque adeo simus insensi furibus, et ideo magnum malum existimamus furtum, quia pecuniam summi boni loco ducimus.



origins of cities or nations, the beginnings of noble families and the examples of famous princes'.<sup>399</sup> Shortly after this Erasmus upbraided an unnamed biographer of Jerome for his 'ridiculous tales of miracles' and 'stories of the most shameless falsity'.<sup>400</sup> After this condemnation of stories that were well known in his day and loomed remarkably over Renaissance iconography,<sup>401</sup> Erasmus asserted that Jerome's real miracles were to be found in his writings: 'if extravagant tales of wondrous happenings are necessary for the reader's pleasure, let him take up Jerome's books, in which there are almost as many miracles as there are opinions.'<sup>402</sup> It is understandable that some modern historians looking at these words could come away with the idea that in Erasmus' *Life* we see the 'fusion or...confusion of secular and sacred attention'.<sup>403</sup>

Erasmus' *Life* was not, however, the first biography of Jerome to leave out, to dismiss or to doubt many widespread stories about the saint's supposed miracles. Bringing up the example of Pierpaolo Vergerio in *Herculean Labours*, Pabel has pointed out that in this early humanist scholar's eighth sermon in praise of Jerome, included in many incunabular editions of Jerome's works<sup>404</sup> and also found in the 1516 Jerome *Edition*'s second volume,<sup>405</sup> 'the only miracle ascribed to Jerome is his learning'.<sup>406</sup> Vergerio did seem to accept as authentic

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<sup>399</sup> VH 15-22: Adeo ut olim viri prudentes quicquid vehementer commendatum esse vellent multitudini, id fabulosis miraculis celebrarent – velut numinum religionem, origines urbium aut gentium, exordia nobilium familiarum, exempla clarissimorum principum. Hoc igitur imperitorum affectu ad ipsorum abuti commodum permittebant illi, sed non nisi sapienti viro, propterea quod huius rei fructus omnis pereat, si semel suboleat artificium mentiendi.

<sup>400</sup> VH 101-107.

<sup>401</sup> To my mind, the most thorough treatment of the iconography of Saint Jerome in the Renaissance is Russo's *Saint Jérôme en Italie*.

<sup>402</sup> VH 133-135: Quod si cui nihil absque miraculorum portentis placere potest, is legat Hieronymianos libros in quibus tot paene miracula sunt quot sententiae.

<sup>403</sup> Jardine, *Man of Letters*, 74. I believe that Pabel is more correct to note that 'Neither Erasmus nor his critics could conceive of an editorial approach that divorced philology from theology, secular from sacred learning'. See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 113

<sup>404</sup> McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome*, 103.

<sup>405</sup> See 1516 *Edition* II, f. 187r.

<sup>406</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 197. In his eighth oration Vergerio wrote: Quid ergo is debet existimari, qui omnium virtutum cunctarumque bonarum artium cumulum non perfunctorie, sed ad summum in se

many traditional Jerome miracles in his other orations written in honour of the saint's feast-day, as McManamon shows.<sup>407</sup> But even given his acceptance of some miracles attributed to Jerome, such as that involving the lion, McManamon believes that for Vergerio, such miracles were not of great moment when compared with Jerome's great learning and his even greater desire to learn. According to McManamon, the content and the form of Vergerio's sermons, written over a century before Erasmus' *Life*, 'demonstrate that he evaluated the tradition with the critical eye he generally brought to historical research'.<sup>408</sup> McManamon also believes that in his sermons, Vergerio 'shaped the material to his broader goal of fostering a cult of Jerome that would make him the patron saint of humanist studies'.<sup>409</sup> From reading Vergerio's orations it is clear that this important early humanist and colleague of Leonardo Bruni did not accept many traditional Jerome stories, and even those which he seemed to accept paled in importance when compared with Jerome's learning.<sup>410</sup>

In his treatment of the cult of Jerome before Mediaeval times, Rice also notes the slow growth of the miracles attached to Jerome over the centuries: 'By the early seventh century Jerome was a saint; by the middle of the eighth, a father and doctor of the church; in the ninth century he acquired a miracle; in the twelfth he became a cardinal.'<sup>411</sup> Rice remarks:

...in spite of the facile pens of the fakers and the fancy of hagiographers...the image of Jerome which literate Europeans shared towards the end of the thirteenth century was by and large a sober one. The threefold character of his achievement – as a scholar and man of letters, as a doctor of the church, teacher, and expounder of holy Scripture, and as an ascetic monk – was clearly recognized and given a balanced respect.

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collegisset: cum vita, totius sanctitatis exemplum: eloquentia, stupor: doctrina, miraculum. For text see PL 22, 0234.

<sup>407</sup> McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome*, 16.

<sup>408</sup> Although McManamon was unable to establish the dates when all the ten sermons that he edited and published in 1996 were delivered, if ever, he is able to show that 'two of the three were delivered after Vergerio had left Padua to join the Papal Court in 1405...An Oxford manuscript of Vergerio's works indicates that he also preached a sermon at Padua in 1392. It had not been possible to determine the precise sequence of the other seven sermons'. For more see McManamon, *The Humanist as Orator*, 121.

<sup>409</sup> McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome*, 16.

<sup>410</sup> McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: The Humanist as Orator*, 86. Vergerio's Greek amazed Bruni.

<sup>411</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 31.

Rice remarks, moreover, that Jerome's Mediaeval biographers were by and large no 'miracle mongers', and he contrasts the seven miracles traditionally ascribed to Ambrose with one ascribed to Jerome. For Rice, it was only in the fourteenth century that this 'balanced admiration was to be abandoned'.<sup>412</sup> Rice's analysis is in this case confirmed by other critical appraisals of prior lives of Jerome, including Leuker's article on Manetti's *De illustribus longevis* (*On Famous Men of Old*), in which he notes that the lives of Jerome stemming from late Antiquity and from the early Middle Ages only contain one miraculous story; namely, that of the lion.<sup>413</sup> Anna Morisi Guerra has remarked that until the twelfth-century life written by Nicholas Maniacutia, 'there was no mention of any miracle or grace obtained' through Jerome's intercession,<sup>414</sup> and Jeremy duQuesnay Adams has pointed out the foremost importance of Jerome's scholarly achievements rather than his supposed miracles to learned Mediaeval churchmen such as Bernard of Clairvaux, John of Salisbury, Gerbet of Aurillac and Pope Gregory VII.<sup>415</sup> Therefore, in both Erasmus' days and long before them, we can find sober appreciations of Jerome and his life. Even the *Legenda Aurea* included 'critical' use of contemporary sources.<sup>416</sup> Voragine's life of Jerome was, for example, the first biography before Erasmus' to use Jerome's letters in order to show that the saintly doctor was no virgin, an interpretation which Erasmus repeated in his *Life* with surprising forcefulness.<sup>417</sup> In the second book of his *Hieronymianus*, Giovanni Andrea seconded

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<sup>412</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 47.

<sup>413</sup> See Leuker, 'Eine kritische', 111.

<sup>414</sup> Morisi Guerra, 'Leggenda', 7.

<sup>415</sup> See Jeremy duQuesnay Adams, 'Jerome: The Classic Correspondent', in *A Leaf from the Letters of Saint Jerome* (Los Angeles: Zeitlin and Ver Brugge; London: H.M. Fletcher, 1981), 3.

<sup>416</sup> David Collins, 'A Life Reconstituted', 31-51.

<sup>417</sup> Pabel discusses this in *Herculean Labours*, 188-189.

Voragine's opinion about Jerome's virginity, confirming from the sources that Jerome clearly foreswore the title of virgin, but also claimed never to have known a woman.<sup>418</sup>

In his *Life of Jerome*, Erasmus refused to treat Jerome's many well-known miracles and explained his decision thus: 'I find it distasteful to say anything about his miracles, which are widely known, whatever pleasure this kind of tale gives to some.'<sup>419</sup> Not to treat these 'widely known' (*vulgatissimi*) stories about Jerome's miracles is not, however, to write off the miraculous wholesale. Erasmus did not do this, for in the above quote the only thing that Erasmus singled out as clearly untrue was a letter claiming that Jerome 'arranged the order of the Divine Office and added two versicles at the end of each Psalm'. According to Erasmus, this letter 'was a fabrication by a worthless fellow using a false name'.<sup>420</sup> In 1516, with his friend Leo X reigning as Pope in Rome and before the shock of Luther's revolt, I do not think that Erasmus was writing in an environment in which openly to cast doubt on widespread stories about Jerome's supposed miracles would have been especially provocative. Was a little light mockery of Jerome's chum the lion truly going to put a bee in Giovanni de' Medici's tiara? Humanist scholars such as Giannozzo Manetti and Johannes Trithemius had already questioned traditional stories about Jerome's supposed miracles. Erasmus, however, did not deny and attack outright these stories, even if he made it clear enough in this prose that, to his mind, many common stories about Jerome were to his mind not worthy of belief and far less important than his writings, 'in which you will find as many miracles as you will

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<sup>418</sup> 1514 *Hieronymianus*, ff. 21v-22r: Secundum Vincentium quinquaginta annis et sex mensibus defundavit, et usque ad finem vitae virgo permansit. Licet autem in hac legenda dicatur quod virgo semper fuerit. Ipse tamen (ut ait frater Jacobus) de se ita scribit ad Pammachium in apologetico circa finem: 'Virginitatem in caelo praefero: non quia habeo, sed quod magis miror quod non habeo.' Sed contrarietatem tollat verbum Basilii dicentis: 'Mulier enim ignoro: et tamen virgo non sum.'

<sup>419</sup> VH 989-990: De miraculis non libet quicquam attingere, iam vulgatissimis, si quis eiusmodi fabulis delectetur.

<sup>420</sup> VH 990-994: Ad hoc quod referunt de digesto per Hieronymum Officio Divino deque duobus versiculis in calce singulorum psalmorum adiectis, an verum sit necne non magni refert: unum illud palam est, epistolam quae testatur id factum, a nebulone confictam alieno titulo.

opinions'.<sup>421</sup> Erasmus instead attacked most strongly what he believed to be trends in contemporary devotion that emphasized Jerome's miracles, which were doubtful at best, over Jerome's 'miraculous' writings.<sup>422</sup> Here too, Erasmus exaggerated. Russo, for example, has shown that in the plastic arts, as early as the 1450s Jerome's 'miraculous' trappings had been reduced to accessories of a *mise-en-scène* and that many contemporaries, from laymen such as Florence's Medici and Rucellai families<sup>423</sup> to religious such as Ambrogio Traversari,<sup>424</sup> Lorenzo Valla and the Abbot Johannes Trithemius, saw in Jerome the ideal 'Christian humanist'.<sup>425</sup> In his *Commerce with the Classics*, Anthony Grafton includes Angelo Decembrio's (1415-1467) description of an ideal humanist library in his *De politia litteraria* (*On Literary Polish*). One of Decembrio's speakers in this work, Leonello d'Este (1407-1450), Marquess of Ferrara from 1441 until his death, mused that 'many find it pleasant to have an image of Jerome writing in his retreat; this teaches us that solitude, silence and hard work in reading and writing are appropriate to libraries'.<sup>426</sup> The 'Christian humanist' Jerome was hardly confined to libraries. Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Saint Jerome*, a fresco painted in 1480 and now on the left side of the nave of Florence's *Ognissanti* church, is one of many remarkable examples of Jerome's representation as an 'humanist' scholar in the fifteenth century.<sup>427</sup> Jerome looks right at the onlooker in wizened tranquillity, with texts open before him. Pieces of paper with apparently Greek and Hebrew characters are fixed to the

<sup>421</sup> VH 133-135: Quod si cui nihil absque miraculorum portentis placere potest, is legat Hieronymianos libros in quibus tot paene miracula sunt quot sententiae.

<sup>422</sup> VH 15-22: Adeo ut olim viri prudentes quicquid vehementer commendatum esse vellent multitudini, id fabulosis miraculis celebrarent – velut numinum religionem, origines urbium aut gentium, exordia nobilium familiarum, exempla clarissimorum principum. Hoc igitur imperitorum affectu ad ipsorum abuti commodum permittebant illi, sed non nisi sapienti viro, propterea quod huius rei fructus omnis pereat, si semel suboleat artificium mentiendi.

<sup>423</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 180. See Bietenholz, 'Kult des Heiliegn Hieronymus', 194-195. See also Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 99-100.

<sup>424</sup> Stinger, 'Humanism', 123.

<sup>425</sup> Mark Vernard, 'Conclusions' in *Humanisme et Église*, 468-469.

<sup>426</sup> See Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pages 30-31. The text of *De politia litteraria* that Grafton cites reads: Ideoque saepenumero cernere est quibusdam iucondissimam imaginem esse Hieronymi describentis in Eremito: per quam in bibliothecis solitudinem atque silentium et studendi scribendique sedulitatem opportunam advertimus.

<sup>427</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 255-256; 273.

bookshelves behind him. Hanging across from this fresco is Botticelli's masterly fresco of Augustine at his own scholar's desk, commissioned by the famous Vespuccio family.<sup>428</sup> Augustine looks up from his books and away from the reader, his eyes fixed on an armillary sphere. Some art historians believe that Botticelli represented Augustine's so-called vision of Jerome found in the letter of Pseudo-Augustine, *De magnificentiis*.<sup>429</sup> We see a remarkably similar representation of Augustine in Vittore Carpaccio's painting, *Saint Augustine in His Study*, finished about 1507 for Venice's Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, where it remains to this day.

Erasmus was also not the first Christian scholar 'apt to distrust all accounts of miracles'.<sup>430</sup> Peter Brown has noted that in his *De vera religione (On True Religion)* and elsewhere, Augustine stressed on many occasions the rareness of true miracles in post-Apostolic times.<sup>431</sup> Augustine's humanist champion, Petrarch, was but one of many firmly believing Catholic scholars before Erasmus who did not easily swallow stories of the miraculous. He even went so far as to ascribe Francis of Assisi's stigmata to 'a psychosomatic explanation'!<sup>432</sup> Petrarch's contemporary Dante did not go to such lengths and accepted the imposition of Francis' stigmata as a true event, but this was the only miracle ascribed to Francis that Dante accepted in his writings. According to Bietenholz, 'Dante demonstratively bypasses the legendary tradition that must have loomed large in the imagination of Erasmus since he mentions Francis' sermon to the birds and chivalrous battles against the temptations of the flesh'.<sup>433</sup> Vergerio, while he may have accepted some miraculous stories about Jerome, usually praised his other achievements and left mention of

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<sup>428</sup> Alexandra Grömling and Tilman Lingesleben, *Alessandro Botticelli* (Potsdam: Ullmann, 2007), 6.

<sup>429</sup> Grömling and Lingesleben, *Botticelli*, 38-42.

<sup>430</sup> See Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula*, 158.

<sup>431</sup> Brown, *Augustine*, 415.

<sup>432</sup> Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula*, 158.

<sup>433</sup> Peter Bietenholz, *History and Biography*, 68.

miracles by the wayside in parenthetical comments.<sup>434</sup> Manetti did not vouch for any of Jerome's miracles,<sup>435</sup> and Zacchia included no miracles reported after Jerome's death in his life of Jerome, despite his apparent acceptance of apocryphal letters that spread stories about Jerome's miracles.<sup>436</sup> In his distrust, dismissal and downplaying of miraculous and of doubtful stories about Jerome, Erasmus was not without company.

Looking beyond the incunable collections of Jerome's works and back to the manuscripts by which Jerome's works and the story of his life had been transmitted to Erasmus' age, in these we also see Christians who had no need for miraculous stories about Jerome. I would like to bring to readers' attention a Vallambrosian manuscript now at Florence's Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana,<sup>437</sup> a Mediaeval lectionary that includes a text identified as Pseudo-Gennadius' *Vita sancti Hieronymi presbyteri (Life of Saint Jerome the Priest)*.<sup>438</sup> This life of Jerome, beginning *Hieronymus natus in oppido Stridonis*, was one of many copied down into a large collection of saints' lives meant to inform the sermons that monks and religious made on saints' feast-days. It was copied out in the Middle Ages' heights, the second quarter of the twelfth century, in a fine Carolingian hand. Whatever the uncertainty of how contemporaries read and used such lectionaries, we can understand that this life of Jerome was meant to inform monks, religious and other readers or listeners about Jerome's life on the occasion of his feast-day, 30 September. Jean-Paul Migne has criticized Pseudo-Gennadius' life, remarking that it 'reeks of later fables'.<sup>439</sup> But in this life of Jerome

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<sup>434</sup> McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: The Humanist as Orator*, 130.

<sup>435</sup> Manetti cited in Leuker, 'Eine Kritische', 128: Quo facto, cum antea assiduis febribus diutius vexaretur, mox expiravit. Post mortem suam, ut veneranda beatissimi viri sanctitas humano generi apertius innotesceret, multa et quidem magna miracula divinitus apparuisse ferunt.

<sup>436</sup> Leuker, 'Eine kritische', 118.

<sup>437</sup> Here we are treating the MS under shelf-mark Conv. Soppr. 300, 118., ff. 346v-349r.

<sup>438</sup> See BHL 3869.

<sup>439</sup> PL 22, 175: Nihil deinde eorum haec vita continet, quae verus Gennadius referre potuisset, imo et debuisse: satis enim habuit quisquis eius auctor fuit, Hieronymum descripsisse, nec fere quidquam habet, quod non in sua ex illo transtulerit. De suo autem quae adtexuit falsa pleraque omnia sunt, et fabulas sequiorum temporum redolent.

we do find many hallmarks of ‘critical history’ as it has been defined by scholars of Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome* since Ferguson.<sup>440</sup> In order to build up his story, Pseudo-Gennadius cited widely not only from Jerome’s letters but also from many of Jerome’s other works, including his forewords to the books of Job and Daniel as well as the prologue to his dialogue against the Pelagians.<sup>441</sup> Whoever wrote this life of Jerome and whenever he did it, the author made wide use of ancient sources and included little treatment of miracles during or after Jerome’s life. This life of Jerome emphasized above all, and maybe more than Erasmus did, Jerome’s painstaking efforts to learn Hebrew and Aramaic and his great literary output in defence of the Faith and against heretics. Although not free from biographical error, from which Erasmus’ *Life* was also not free,<sup>442</sup> according to the criteria accepted since Ferguson we might call Pseudo-Gennadius’ life of Jerome a work of ‘critical’ history.

Giovanni Andrea also cast doubt on some of Jerome’s miracles in his *Hieronymianus*. In the text of Voragine’s life of Jerome with which the *Hieronymianus*’ second part began, Andrea inserted parenthetical comments that seemed to question traditional stories about Jerome. We see one example of this when Voragine’s life treated the story about Jerome’s being shamed out of Rome for unwittingly showing up to morning prayers in a woman’s garb that conspiring backbiters had put down in place of his usual clothing the night before. Into the passages relating this story Andrea inserted in parentheses the words, ‘so say Jacobus [of

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<sup>440</sup> For another text of the life see PL 22, 183.

<sup>441</sup> Pseudo-Gennadius cited the famous passage about the Cicero dream from Jerome, Letter 22; he cited all Jerome’s Letter 25 to Damasus, *Dormientem te*; he cited Jerome’s Letter 102 to Augustine; he also cited at length from Jerome’s Letter 125, *Nihil Christiano felicius*.

<sup>442</sup> Pseudo-Gennadius does not seem to have remarked that Jerome took two voyages to the Holy Land. Erasmus, for his part, claimed that Jerome had died in 422, when he died in 420. See VH, 980-984: Tandem vitae cursu felicissime peracto, ad immortalitatis lauream est evocatus, anno aetatis suae nonagesimo primo; anno vero salutis humanae quadringentesimo secundo, sub Honorio et Constantio iam in imperii consortium assumpto.



Voragine] and Vincent [de Beauvais]’,<sup>443</sup> leaving the reader to doubt whether or not to accept the story as true. Decades later the Archbishop of Florence, Antonius Perozzi (1389-1459), rejected this same story as ‘not very true to life’.<sup>444</sup> Andrea also questioned the story of the lion<sup>445</sup> as well as the story that Jerome had been ordained cardinal presbyter of Saint Anastasia at Rome, which detail was, according to Andrea, found ‘in a legend’.<sup>446</sup>

Given the above evidence, we can conclude that long before Erasmus, believing and practicing Christians doubted and rejected miraculous stories about saints and about Jerome’s life without becoming on this account the unwitting forebears of a ‘modern’ secular historical tradition. Moreover, such doubts and rejection of the miraculous neither made for a ‘de-sacralized’ Jerome nor fostered ‘fusion or...confusion of secular and sacred attention’.<sup>447</sup> It must be said that the whole conversation about the ‘fusion or...confusion of secular and sacred attention’ also does not take into account the Catholic Church’s own rules about discerning miracles’ truthfulness which are much more ‘sceptical’ than many laymen might foresee. In Erasmus’ time, and no less today, there are probably few things more noisome for your average Catholic bishop than popular miracle-workers or seers, fake or not. But as Russo was right to point out, the supernatural is, after all, normal for believing Christians such as Erasmus. The larger idea to come away with is that when looking at those writing within a Catholic religious tradition in which true miracles have always been and still are needed as proof of saintliness, the fact that the conclusions of Mediaeval and later Catholic

<sup>443</sup> See 1514 *Hieronymianus*, f. 21r: Sed dum quorundam clericorum et monachorum lasciviam increparet, cuius rei fiduciam a conscientiae puritate fumeabant, illi nimium indignati et insidias paraverunt, et pro vestem mulierbrem (ut ait Jo. Bereth, et Vincentius) ab eis turpiter est derisus.

<sup>444</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine kritische’, 116-117. See also Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 123-124.

<sup>445</sup> 1514 *Hieronymianus*, f. 22v: Ac leo terribiliter rugiens percutiebat cauda fortiter terram, perterritosque camelos, sicut erant onusti ante se ad cellam ire coegit. Quod cum fratres vidissent et Hieronymo nunciassent, ille ait: ‘Fratres charissimi hospitibus vestris (dicit antiqua legenda) et camelis sacras auferentes, pedes abluite: escas praebete: et super hoc voluntatem Domini expectate.’

<sup>446</sup> 1514 *Hieronymianus*, f. 20v: Dum autem esset annorum XXXVIII per Liberium papam cardinalis presbyter ordinatus est ad titulum sancte Anastasiae (ut continet una legenda) in quo fastigio cum multa puritate mentis et abstinencia corporis sanctitatis ministrabat exempla.

<sup>447</sup> See Jardine, *Man of Letters*, 73.

historians and hagiographers do not agree with those of ‘modern’ historians should not make us think that ‘truth’ was of little moment to the former. Our own scepticism of the miraculous should not keep us from understanding that the sources themselves make many more truths possible than those which we see, or choose to see, in the writings of Jerome and of other contemporary Christians. For many Mediaeval and Renaissance men and women, to reject the truth of miracles would seem as absurd as to accept them would seem to many of us today.

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Before closing this chapter I would also like to stress a religious thrust of Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome* that has yet to be taken seriously enough in secondary literature; that is, Erasmus’ presentation of Jerome’s fight against heresy. I do not believe that we can chalk up Erasmus’ praise of Jerome’s hammering heretics, praise that he shared with most of Jerome’s prior biographers, to some need which he felt to pay lip-service to Catholic orthodoxy. We must remember that Erasmus wrote the *Life* well before the Lutheran storm broke out and that he himself was far more ‘orthodox’ than many scholars before him who died without a hitch within the Church’s bosom, such as the German humanist Conrad Celtis (1459-1508).<sup>448</sup> Even had he been of such a mind, Erasmus’ incentive to make token statements of orthodoxy was probably small when he wrote the *Life*, and at the very least we ought to be willing to see in Erasmus’ *Life* evidence that the ongoing fight against heresy was part of Erasmus’ larger project to try to make Christian life purer and more authentic.<sup>449</sup> Charles Trinkaus may have gone too far when he wrote that Lorenzo Valla ‘came to consider the

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<sup>448</sup> See Lewis Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 102.

<sup>449</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 7.

entire scholastic theological enterprise as a travesty and a great generator of heresy'.<sup>450</sup> Valla was, after all, the author of the *Encomium Sancti Thomae Aquinatis (In Praise of Thomas Aquinas)*. Nonetheless, Valla clearly did see danger to Catholic orthodoxy in contemporary philosophy that drew mainly from Aristotle, and I believe that Erasmus shared Valla's suspicion of some scholastic scholarship's orthodoxy, a strain in his thought that we can trace back to Geert Groote (1340-1384) and to the Brethren of the Common Life.<sup>451</sup> The masterpiece of the *Devotio Moderna* was, after all, the *Imitatio Christi (Imitation of Christ)*, a work no less suspicious than Erasmus of 'scholastic' university scholarship and debate. Erasmus' criticism of 'scholastics' that we see in the *Life* as well as his praise of Jerome's fight against heresy were perhaps better seen in light of Erasmus' own quest to champion Catholic orthodoxy as he understood it and to fight against those 'sophists' who were undoing it with their quiddities and who, 'totally ignorant of all the arts and lacking refinement, rely on a few paltry sophisms and on a smattering of Aristotelian philosophy', and 'rush into the profession of theology with unwashed feet and hands'.<sup>452</sup>

It must be noted, however, that Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* took a hard line on fourth-century heretics and controversies which we simply do not see in his writings about

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<sup>450</sup> Charles Trinkaus, 'Italian Humanism and Scholastic Theology', in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms and Legacy*, ed. Albert Rabil, Jr. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 327-348. On page 336 Trinkaus observed of Valla: He regarded the broad acceptance of the ideas and values of Classical texts – not just those of the ancient moralists but of Classical literature generally – by his humanist contemporaries as a malignant contamination to Christian thought. Even more radically, he came to consider the entire scholastic theological enterprise as a travesty and a great generator of heresy...as Camporeale has shown, Valla's position was remarkably close to certain twelfth- and thirteenth-century critics of this trend, and, I would suggest, to aspects of the Condemnations of 1277.

<sup>451</sup> Harald Müller, *Habit und Habitus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 102. See John D'Amico, *Theory and Practice in Renaissance Textual Criticism* (Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988), 151-154.

<sup>452</sup> VH 791-798: *Iam itaque longo rerum usu comparata prudentia, multorumque doctissimorum hominum congressu, iusta eruditione collecta, ad tractandas divinas litteras accinxit sese. His instructus praesidiis vir prudentissimus theologi munus aggressus est: cum hodie quidam omnium bonarum litterarum prorsus rudes et ἄμουςοι, pauculis sophismatibus et male degustata Aristotelis philosophia freti, pedibus ac manibus illotis irruant in theologiae professionem.*

Luther.<sup>453</sup> In contrast to the *Life*, in which Erasmus condemned Arians, Origenists and a wide variety of ‘heresiarchs’, in Erasmus’ 1519 letter to the powerful Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg (1490-1545) treating the quickly unravelling Luther affair, he explained in great detail the reasons for which one must be very careful before smacking someone with the label of ‘heresy’, a public branding only meant for the most hard-headed gainsayers of the Faith’s basic tenets. When it came to his fellow Augustinian monk, Erasmus urged understanding and patience.<sup>454</sup> In this same letter Erasmus criticized those who would ‘neither warn nor teach Luther’, preferring instead to drag him ‘with insane clamours before the people and upbraid him with the most savage and virulent detractions, having nothing in their mouth besides heresy and heretics’. Such zeal, Erasmus remarked, was most misguided, especially since ‘it is found that things are damned as heretical in the books of Luther that are called orthodox and pious in the books of Augustine and of Bernhard’.<sup>455</sup> For Erasmus, in the case of Luther, the right way to approach would-be heretics was to confront them with patience, with teaching and with Christian mildness. Even in the most extreme cases of the Church’s past, according to Erasmus, teaching was always one of the most important ways of dealing with heretics. Erasmus believed that too many had forgot this when it came to the Lutheran affair: ‘Although the propriety of theologians is to teach, now I see many who do nothing unless they can compel, destroy and extinguish; whereas Augustine did not approve those who would compel others without teaching them even when writing against the Donatists,

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<sup>453</sup> Trithemius called Jerome the ‘strongest hammer of heretics’. See 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, f. 17r: Hieronymus presbyter et monachus patre natus Eusebio ex oppido Stridonis, vir in secularibus litteris valde eruditus, et in divinis Scripturis inter omnes Doctores eruditissimus, multarum linguarum peritia insignis, sacrae legis interpres, haereticorum malleus et expugnator fortissimus.

<sup>454</sup> Allen 1033, 57-68.

<sup>455</sup> Allen 1033, 71-84: Nunc theologi quidam, quos ego novi, nec admonent nec docent Lutherum; tantum insanis clamoribus apud populum traducant hominem, et virum saevissimis et virulentissimis obtrectationibus lacerant, nihil habentes in ore praeter haereses et haereticos. Negari non potest hic clamatum fuisse apud populum odiosissime, ab iis qui libros Luhteri nondum viderunt...Compertum est ab his damnata ut haeretica in libris Lutheri, quae in Bernhardi et Augustini libris ut orthodoxa, imo ut pia leguntur.

who were not only heretics but also most savage thieves'.<sup>456</sup> Erasmus believed that instead of railing against Luther and Lutherans, Catholic Christians should try to understand the true wellsprings of contemporary dissent from the Church's authority:

We ought first to look at the root of this plant. The world is burdened by human laws. It is burdened by scholastic dogma and opinions. It is burdened by the tyranny of the mendicant brothers...for whom the Pope, when he does something for them, is more than God: and when he does something against their wishes, he is worth no more than a dream.<sup>457</sup>

In order to show ways to address heresy in the sixteenth century, Erasmus brought up the example of the 'old days' in which the charge and the label of heresy, and the consequent removal of heretics from the Catholic communion, was truly a last resort. This was in contrast to what went on in the 1510s, Erasmus noted, when the words 'heresy' leapt to too many lips on account of the slightest provocation or disagreement.<sup>458</sup> In a letter to Jodocus Jonus written from Louvain and dated 10 May 1521, and therefore after Leo X's formal excommunication of Luther with his Bull *Decet Romanum Pontificem* and the latter's very public stand before Emperor Charles V at the 1521 Diet of Worms, Erasmus repeated many of the above views and cited the examples of Augustine, of Paul and of Christ in order to show that mildness and patience were the best antidotes to heresy and to those inclined to it. Erasmus asked, 'What then is our religion if not peace in the Holy Ghost?' For Erasmus, in this world the Church was called to keep in its ranks the bad along with the good, the weeds along with the wheat. He also argued that Christians should try better to understand those who criticized the Roman Church for its failure to live up to its own standards, especially

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<sup>456</sup> Allen 1033, 102-109: Ad haec, cum theologorum sit proprium docere, nunc video multos nihil aliud agere nisi ut cogant aut perdant et extinguant; cum Augustinus ne adversus Donatistas quidem – non haereticos modo verum etiam saevissimos latrones – probet eos qui cogant tantum, non etiam doceant. Homines, quos maxime decebat mansuetudo, nihil aliud sitire videntur quam humanum sanguinem, tantum in hoc inhiant ut capiatur, ut perdat Lutherus. Atqui hoc est carnificem agere, non theologum.

<sup>457</sup> Allen 1033, 119-126: Spectandi in primis sunt huius mali fontes. Mundus oneratus est constitutionibus humanis. Oneratus est opinionibus et dogmatibus scholasticis. Oneratus est tyrannide fratrum mendicantium; qui cum sint satellites Sedis Romanae, tamen eo potentiae ac multitudinis evadunt ut ipsi Romano Pontifici atque ipsis adeo regibus sint formidabiles. His cum pro ipsis facit Pontifex, plusquam Deus est: in his quae faciunt adversus illorum commodum, non plus valet quam somnium.

<sup>458</sup> Allen 1033, 229-243.

when even the ‘early Church’ had degenerated from the ‘zeal of Gospel purity’ such that Jerome himself called Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse.<sup>459</sup> Although Erasmus’ attitude towards Luther and other reformers hardened in the 1520s when the consequences of their actions and of various political and religious powers’ responses to them became clearer,<sup>460</sup> his great understanding and patience in the heady days of Luther’s first stand against the Papacy is probably a better representation of Erasmus’ mindset as he sat down to write the *Life of Jerome* and his commentaries for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. Face-to-face with Luther’s Europe-shaking revolt against Papal authority a few years later, Erasmus begged for peace and for understanding and could not bring himself to call Luther a real heretic.<sup>461</sup> At a time when many theologians brandished and hurled the powerful charge of ‘heresy’, Erasmus rarely used this word in his early engagements with the Luther affair.

For this reason it might surprise us to see Erasmus’ attitudes towards heresy in his *Life of Jerome*. He ends this biography, after calling upon peoples of all nations to embrace Jerome as their own, by excluding only heretics from the communion of people who might take pleasure and profit from Jerome and from his works: ‘There is no kind of teaching which cannot use his support, no way of life which may not be formed by his precepts. Let only the heretics abhor and hate Jerome. They were the only ones he always considered the bitterest of enemies.’<sup>462</sup> Erasmus’ language about heresy throughout the *Life* did not show the patience and understanding that we see in his early writings about Luther – far from it. Heresy had an

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<sup>459</sup> Allen 1202, 9-19: Quid enim est aliud nostra religio quam pax in Spiritu sancto? Porro Christi Ecclesiam, quoniam adhuc pisces bonos et malos eodem reti complectitur et zizania mixta tritico ferre cogitur, et olim magnis viciis laborasse testantur veteres orthodoxi; subinde deplorantes corruptissimos mores eorum ordinum unde conveniebat ingenuae pietatis exempla proficisci. Porro quam Ecclesia Romana et olim degenerarit ab Evangelicae puritatis studio, vel Hieronymus satis arguit, qui eam ex Apocalypsi Babylonem appellat, vel divus Bernardus in libris quibus titulum fecit *De consideratione*: quanquam non defuerunt et ex recentioribus celebrati nominis autores qui publicam instaurationem ecclesiasticae disciplinae flagitarent.

<sup>460</sup> See Erasmus’ *Hyperaspites* published in 1526.

<sup>461</sup> Bietenholz, *History and Biography*, 73.

<sup>462</sup> VH 1562-1565: Nullum doctrinae genus est, quod hinc non queant adiuvari; nullum vitae institutum, quod huius praeceptis non formetur. Soli haeretici Hieronymum horreant et oderint, quos ille solos semper acerrimos hostes habuit.

outstanding role in the *Life*'s story. It was, for example, 'the Arian faction' that was behind Jerome's second departure from Rome for the Middle East in a cloud of controversy:

There had crept unobserved into the city certain individuals of the Arian faction who now were calling their party Origenist. The name was different, the error the same. In order to strengthen their influence they insinuated themselves into close relationships with noble ladies and scattered their poison in their teachings. They lured Jerome into the fellowship of their party because he had found delight in the genius of Origen above all others and had praised him highly. These Origenists were more harmful enemies because they plotted their extremely hostile acts under the guise of friendship. As a result Jerome decided to leave Rome.<sup>463</sup>

Like the author of the apocryphal letter of Pseudo-Eusebius to Damasus and to Theodosion,<sup>464</sup> Erasmus claimed that Jerome's treatment at the hands of such enemies made his life a long and continual martyrdom.<sup>465</sup> For such enemies, including Rufinus, Erasmus had only the harshest words and to them he could ascribe only the basest motives, and Godin is right to remark that Erasmus' extreme bias against Rufinus ranks among one of the *Life of Jerome*'s remarkable weaknesses as a work of history.<sup>466</sup>

When writing about fourth-century heresies in the *Life*, Erasmus also developed some negative appraisals of early Christian practice and discipline that underlay his particular vision of the 'early Church'. He claimed: 'there was never an age more prone to dissension or

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<sup>463</sup> VH 638-647: Irrepserant clanculum in urbem Arianæ factionis quidam, sed mutato iam nomine Origenistæ, ut diversus esset titulus, error idem. Ii, quo suas partes communirent, in nobilium matronarum familiaritatem at amicitiam insinuare sese, et dogmatis suis venenum spargere; Hieronymum, quod is Origenis ingenio præter cæteros delectatus, laudibus extulisset hominem, in suæ factionis consortium pertrahere, hoc nocentiores inimici, quod sub amicitiae prætextu plusquam hostilia molirentur, adeo ut deserendæ Romæ consilium ceperit.

<sup>464</sup> In the second chapter of this letter we see Jerome's treatment of heretics described thus: Duplex namque martyrium est: unum succumbere gladiis impiorum, alterum in infirmitatibus et adversitatibus in animo patientiam custodire. Certe hic est vere martyr quod propter iustitiam et mansuetudinem et salutiferam suæ doctrine verba; in huius mundi lachrimarum valle certamen forte a malorum coetu viriliter supportavit. See PL 22, 242.

<sup>465</sup> Compare Erasmus' descriptions of Jerome's 'martyrdom' with those of Pseudo-Eusebius. See VH 960-963: Adversus hæreticorum vim et insidias nonnihil adiutus est in Syria ab Epiphano ac Theophilo Alexandrinæ urbis episcopo; Romæ Marcella, Pammachio, Chromatioque, quos sibi vel ob Paulæ affinitatem habebat admodum faventes. Horum etiam benignitate sublevabatur. Quis in huiusmodi vita martyrium requirat, quæ quid aliud fuit quam diutinum ac perpetuum martyrium? Et reperias qui mortem possint contemnere, contumeliam non possint.

<sup>466</sup> See Godin, '*Érasme biographe patristique*', 357-360: Le travail d'Erasmus comporte trois faiblesses par rapport à l'idéal d'objectivité et d'exhaustivité que l'on exige aujourd'hui d'une biographie scientifique...1). Confusions, oublies, erreurs; 2). Effets d'idéalisation sur les personnes et les institutions; 3). L'Animosité vis-à-vis de Rufin.

more confused; and all things were so contaminated by the errors and disagreements of the heretics that to remain orthodox required a considerable degree of skill.<sup>467</sup> First among such heresies, according to Erasmus, was the ‘Arian faction’:

...it was the Arian faction especially that had drawn into controversy all of the East, indeed all of the world, by writings, by force of arm and by support of the emperors. That evil, somehow put to rest, later with a new name was reborn through the Origenists, as I said before, and in a surprising way crept into the city of Rome itself, not openly but stealthily, making its way underground, so to speak...

Of this faction, Erasmus recounted, in a typically misleading portrayal of Rufinus, ‘the leader of this movement and the standard-bearer was Rufinus of Aquileia, with whom Jerome had had a very close relationship when they both were boys’. It was a love, however, that rivalry and loathing later replaced with like force, ‘according to Aristotle’s proverb’, in which ‘those who had loved each other with the greatest intensity also attacked each other with the fiercest hatred’. Here Erasmus first excused Jerome’s many sharp words against Rufinus and his party with the idea that to defend oneself against heresy was a Christian duty and wholly justified.<sup>468</sup> Erasmus developed this apology for Jerome’s satire of Rufinus in the *Life*’s next paragraph, in which he noted that Jerome’s nature was indeed ‘impetuous’ and ‘fiery’, but that in this case Jerome’s harsh words were not unbefitting a Christian but rather fulfilling a Christian duty since the charge here was ‘the charge of heresy, and in the matter of heresy tolerance is an impiety, not a virtue’.<sup>469</sup> After writing at length of Rufinus’ evil works against Jerome, Erasmus concluded that ‘so effective was the malicious cunning of his rivals that not even Saint Augustine himself, the bishop of Hippo, had, it seems, the highest opinion of

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<sup>467</sup> VH 838-841: Nullum fuit unquam saeculum seditiosius neque confusius; et sic omnia contaminarant haeticorum errores ac dissidia, ut magnae cuiusdam artis fuerit orthodoxum esse.

<sup>468</sup> VH 842-865: Verum in primis Arianorum factio, litteris, armis, et imperatorum praesidiis, totum Orientem, immo totum orbem in dissidium pertraxerat. Id mali utcumque sopitum, postea mutato cognomine per Origenistas renatum est, ut ante dixi, et in ipsam usque Romanam urbem mire irrepserat, non palam, sed cuniculis quibusdam sese furtim insinuans; cuius rei dux ac signifer Ruffinus Aquileiensis, cum quo puer puero Hieronymus arctissimam habuerat consuetudinem, et mirus quidam amor intercesserat: id quod facile liquet ex epistola cuius initium, ‘In ea mihi eremi parte’. Verum evenit iuxta proverbium Aristotelicum, ut qui sese impensissime dilexerant, acerrimis item odiis prosequerentur...

<sup>469</sup> VH 865-870: Primum ipsa scripta clamitant Hieronymo vehemens et ardens fuisse ingenium, humanissimum quidem, sed liberum; hoc impatientius contumeliae, quod nulli malum moliretur. Deinde haereseos ea est insimulatio, in qua tolerantem esse impietas sit, non virtus.



Jerome's faith until he gained a closer and more intimate acquaintance with his life and learning'. But after their first strained exchanges of letters, 'as soon as they came to be well known to each other, united in mind and heart, they worked together to defend the Catholic faith against the attacks of the heretics'.<sup>470</sup>

For Erasmus, it was in the fight against heresy that Jerome was at his saintly best: 'So it was the mind of Christ that the valour of a famous soldier, when aroused by innumerable attacks, should begin to shine forth more brilliantly and that like gold proved by fire, tried by endless adversity, he moves through good fortune and ill towards the prize of immortality.'<sup>471</sup> In this 'brilliant' fight against heresy, which according to Erasmus made Jerome's life 'nothing else than a lasting and perpetual martyrdom', not a few Christians helped Jerome, including Epiphanius in Syria, Theophilus the Bishop of the city of Alexandria and Marcella, Pammachius and Chromatius at Rome, 'strong supporters on account of Paula's relationship with him'. Since 'their good will...sustained him', Jerome was able to fight long and everywhere for orthodoxy's sake in this muddled and strife-riven age.<sup>472</sup> Likewise in Erasmus' commentaries on Jerome's letters the Prince of Humanists cheered on Jerome's fight against heresy and especially against Rufinus and the 'Origenist' party.<sup>473</sup> Jerome's

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<sup>470</sup> VH 901-918: Ac tantum valuit aemulorum malitiosa calliditas, ut nec ipse Divus Augustinus Hipponensis episcopus optime sensisse videatur de fide Hieronymi, priusquam propius et interius nosset hominis et vitam et eruditionem...Verum simul atque uterque alteri penitus coepit esse cognitus; iunctis animis ac studiis communi opera fidem catholicam adversus haeresiarcharum insultus tuebantur; et minus sibi placuit Augustinus, ubi Hieronymi magnitudinem pernoverat, ex exploratore factus discipulus. Ita ex initio qualicunque, summa inter illos conflata est necessitudo.

<sup>471</sup> VH 946-950: Sic visum est Christo, ut incliti militis virtus tot exagitata procellis clarius enitesceret, ac velut aurum igni probatum, perpetuis exercitus malis per infamiam et bonam famam grassaretur ad immortalitatis brabium. Aderat luctanti, qui periculis obiiciebat, et idem vires dabat, qui daturus erat praemium.

<sup>472</sup> VH 956-963: Adversus haereticorum vim et insidias nonnihil adiutus est in Syria ab Epiphanio ac Theophilo Alexandrinae urbis episcopo; Romae Marcella, Pammachio, Chromatioque, quos sibi vel ob Paulae affinitatem habebat admodum faventes. Horum etiam benignitate sublevabatur. Quis in huiusmodi vita martyrium requirat, quae quid aliud fuit quam diutinum ac perpetuum martyrium? Et reperias qui mortem possint contemnere, contumeliam non possint.

<sup>473</sup> See, for instance, the *argumentum* to the letter *Dominus qui* from Theophilus to Epiphanius in 1516 *Edition* III, f. 141r: Theophilus episcopus Alexandrinus adhortatur Epiphanium episcopum Salamiae Cypri, ut modis omnibus adnitatur, quo convocata synodo, Origenistarum haeresis publica autoritate damnetur. See the

contemporaries often called his orthodoxy into question, something that Erasmus rightly noted in his *Life*.<sup>474</sup> Since Erasmus wrote the *Life* before 1516, we would probably do best not to read into Erasmus' spirited attack on heretics and his defence of Jerome's orthodoxy a 'self-portrait' that it would not have made much too sense to paint before Luther, however daring Erasmus' work for the 1516 Froben *New Testament* was. Even if Olin probably exaggerated when he claimed that 1516 was Erasmus' *annus mirabilis* and the 'climax of his career',<sup>475</sup> Erasmus' output during this year did help to make him one of Christendom's scholarly superstars. Before 1516, criticism of Erasmus and of his prior works was more limited than it became after this pivotal year and those to follow, when the Lutheran revolt helped to turn tricky theological debates and questions into explosive controversies and outright warfare. The explanation that Erasmus' discussion of heresy in the *Life of Jerome* was mainly meant to have relevance to his own situation is incomplete at best. Far more likely is it that Erasmus took heresy seriously, even if in his own way and on his own terms. Bietenholz has rightly noted that both ancient and modern 'heresies interested Erasmus immensely'. Although Erasmus was cautious about the religious controversies breaking out in his own day, he had no problems taking up a strong stand when it came to fourth-century heresies: whereas Erasmus had great trouble accepting that Luther was an outright heretic, Rufinus was, if not an heretic beyond the pale, then at the very least one of the greatest villains of early Christianity. Erasmus may not have applied the same standards to the Church of his own day and to that in which Jerome and Rufinus lived, wrote, argued and reviled each other. Erasmus' treatment of heresy in his *Life of Jerome*, however, is something that we

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*argumentum* to the letter *Meminit beatitudo* from Jerome to Theophilus in the 1516 *Edition* III, f. 141: Theophilum episcopum Alexandrinum estimulat in Origenistarum factionem. Verum in his epistolis tametsi doctae sunt, admiror aequalitatem stili, cum Theophilus ni fallor Graece scripserit. Unde mihi videtur eruditus aliquis ex actis haec conscripsisse. Sed integrum esto nihilo secius suum cuique iudicium. For more examples, see the *argumenta* to the letters *Sanctus episcopus*, *Nuper quae*, *Duplicem mihi* and *Didici quod* in 1516 *Edition* III, ff. 141r/v.

<sup>474</sup> For more on Jerome's often challenged orthodoxy, see Cain, *Letters of Jerome*, 2-3.

<sup>475</sup> John C. Olin, 'Erasmus and Saint Jerome' in *Thought* 54 (1979): 315. See Richard Joseph Schoeck, *Erasmus of Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 165-174.

cannot responsibly overlook, since Erasmus' forewords to Patristic editions 'are saturated with references to, and sometimes proper lists of, the various heretical movements'.<sup>476</sup> From a close look at his *Life* and at his commentaries for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, we must conclude that Erasmus took seriously his own understanding of Catholic Christian orthodoxy and of 'heretical' backslidings from this orthodoxy.

To conclude, close reading of the sources does not allow us to state that Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* was especially 'critical' because of the doubt he cast on Jerome's miracles, a doubt that many scholars before him had expressed, and sometimes with stronger words than he. It also shows that, far from giving us a portrait of Jerome in which the secular and the sacred were 'fused and confused' to the latter's eventual demise, Erasmus' *Life* presented Jerome as 'the theologian' above all others, a model of Christian piety and an unfailing champion of Catholic orthodoxy.<sup>477</sup> Erasmus' Jerome was a pious and orthodox Catholic Christian. To see Erasmus' treatment of Jerome's miracles and of his life as the forerunner of modern, 'critical' and 'scientific' history is to stretch the sources to their breaking point. What is more, Erasmus believed that, 'as Cicero, again, is nowhere more to be admired as an orator than when resentment has, as it were, stuck spurs into his powerful eloquence, so does Saint Jerome – always so well-read, always so eloquent – never speak better than when he is denouncing heresy or misrepresentation, if one can describe as denunciation what is spirited defence of the truth'.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> Bietenholz, *History and Biography*, 37.

<sup>477</sup> See Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 128-129.

<sup>478</sup> Introductory letter to 1524 *Edition*: Porro quemadmodum M. Tullius nusquam est admirabilior in dicendo quam vbi dolor ceu calcar addit eloquentiae viribus, ita diuus Hieronymus, cum nusquam non sit eruditus, nusquam non eloquens, tamen haud alibi dicit melius quam vbi maledicit haereticis aut calumniatoribus: si tamen hoc est maledicere, quod verum est acriter defendere. See CWE 61, 101.

Often showcased as an example of ‘non-critical’ history, the *Legenda Aurea* closed its life of Jerome by quoting the saint’s letter to Asella in which he recounted the scorn and wrongs that he had suffered at the hands of heretics.<sup>479</sup> Therefore, much as Erasmus did in his *Life* many centuries later, Voragine ended his biography by praising the fact that heretics hated and slandered Jerome. Did Erasmus get the idea for this ending from the *Legenda Aurea*? This remains uncertain. What I can say is that many lives of Jerome written before 1516 shared remarkable similarities with each other and with Erasmus’ *Life*.<sup>480</sup> In the next chapter we shall be looking more closely at such similarities.

Before taking up this task, however, we would do well to call to mind that Erasmus’ friend Leo X three times invoked Jerome in his first Bull against Martin Luther, *Exsurge Domine*, condemning with Jerome’s example those such as Luther who would ‘twist’ the sacred Scriptures to their own purposes.<sup>481</sup> Erasmus had originally thought to dedicate the 1516 Jerome *Edition* to Leo X before deciding at last to dedicate to him the much more delicate 1516 Froben *New Testament*, which Leo X enthusiastically received. It is fascinating to see that two thorough-going and committed humanists, the Medicean Pope and Erasmus, revered Jerome and cited him time and again as an example of orthodoxy and the scourge of

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<sup>479</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*: Quas tamen persecutiones quam libenter sustinuerit patet ex eo quod sic dicit in epistola ad Assellam: ‘Gratias ago Deo quia dignus sum habitus quem oderit mundus, et maleficum me garruit. Sed scio ad regnum pervenire per infamiam et bonam famam.’ Item: ‘Utinam ob Domini mei nomen atque iustitiam universa me infidelium turba persequatur! Utinam in obprobrium meum solidius exurgat hic mundus, tantum ut merear a Christo laudari et suae pollicitationis sperare mercedem. Grata itaque et desideranda temptatio est cuius praemium a Christo speratur in caelo. Nec maledictio gravis est quae divina laude mutatur.’

<sup>480</sup> These included the widespread life *Plaerosque nimirum* that we find at the beginning of the 1508 Saccon edition and in many other incunabular editions which Erasmus and the Froben editors used.

<sup>481</sup> For the text of *Exsurge Domine* see *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papstums und des römischen Katholizismus*, eds. Carl Mirbt and Kurt Aland (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1967), 184: *Exsurge tu quoque, quaesumus, Paule, qui eam tua doctrina, ac pari martyrio illuminasti atque illustrasti. Iam enim surgit novus Porphyrius, qui sicut ille olim sanctos Apostolos iniuste momordit, ita hic sanctos Pontifices praedecessores nostros contra tuam doctrinam eos non obsecrando, sed increpando, mordere, lacerare, ac ubi causae suae diffidit, ad convicia accedere non veretur, more haereticorum, quorum, ut inquit Hieronymus, ultimum praesidium est, ut cum conspiciant causas suas damnatum iri, incipiant virus serpentis lingua diffundere: et cum se victos conspiciant, ad contumelias prosilire.*

heretics, past and present. It was the ambivalent humanist and more scholastic-minded Luther, however, who ‘hated’ Jerome as much as he had once loved and read him, quipping that there was more learning in Aesop than in ‘all Jerome’s work’ and calling Jerome his ‘greatest enemy’ among the Church Fathers, if not an outright heretic and a dubious saint.<sup>482</sup>

Humanism and Catholic orthodoxy, after all, were not always uneasy bedfellows, and the decisive break from Catholic orthodoxy in Western Christendom did not come about mainly owing to the consequences of humanist movements. The humanist tradition prized and revered the ancients and the anchor of tradition, and the Church Fathers ranked highly in this tradition for all the icons of Renaissance humanism. Luther’s Reformation began, however, with ninety-five theses – a run-of-the-mill scholastic debate.

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<sup>482</sup> Everyone owes this quote to Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 139. See Luther’s *Tischreden*, number 445 in the *Weimarer Ausgabe. Tischreden*, volume 1 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1912), 194-195: Ergo nullum doctorem scio, quem aequè oderim, cum tamen ardentissime eum amaverim et legerim. In Aesopo certe plus est eruditionis quam in toto Hieronymo. Si tamen urgeret opera fidei et fructus Evangelii; tantum dicit de ieiuniis etc. Ich wolt gern wissen wie der man wer selig worden! Hieronymus soll nicht unter die Lehrer der Kirchen mit gerechnet noch gezahlt werden, denn er ist ein Ketzer gewesen; doch gläube ich, daß er selig den durch den Glauben an Christum. Er redet von Christo nicht, denn daß er nur den Namen in Munde gefuhrt hat. Ich weiß keinen unter den Lehrern, dem ich so feind bin, als Hieronymo, denn er schreibt nur von Fasten, Speise und Jungfrauschaft.

## PART I: CHAPTER VI

### ERASMUS' *LIFE OF JEROME* AND OTHER LIVES OF JEROME

Hitherto we have had only glimpses at biographical treatments of Jerome by writers from late Antiquity until Erasmus' lifetime, including Pseudo-Gennadius, the unknown author of *Plaerosque nimirum*, Nicholas Maniacutia (12th century), Giovanni Andrea (1270-1348), Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder (1370-1444), Giannozzo Manetti (1396-1459), Laudivio Zacchia (c.1435-1475?) and Johannes Trithemius (1492-1516). The purpose of this chapter will be to look more closely at these descriptions of Jerome's life prior to 1516 and to show that although Erasmus had written an engaging and innovative *Life*, he was writing within a long tradition of Jerome biographies which he knew and which was known to his learned contemporaries. Leuker has already shown that many lives of Jerome before Erasmus contained 'critical' elements, and that many of the reasons given by Rice, and upheld by others, in order to justify the *Life*'s uniqueness do not take into account prior biographers' achievements.<sup>483</sup> Erasmus may not have read every prior biographical account of Jerome, but he was aware of the tradition that they embodied, and from which he drew. By looking closely at moments when Erasmus shared concerns with prior biographers, we can arrive at a better understanding of the historiographical context in which Erasmus wrote the *Life*.

In their beginning is our beginning. As we have seen, Erasmus began his *Life* with a long and polemical plea for truth in history-writing coupled with a powerful condemnation of prior efforts to write Jerome's life. In beginning his *Life* with criticism of past lives of

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<sup>483</sup> See Leuker, 'Eine kritische', 119-125.

Jerome, Erasmus was, in fact, following in the footsteps of Maniacutia and of Zacchia, both of whom also wrote introductions in order to justify and to explain their own lives of Jerome. Since Maniacutia's biography was included in the 1497-1498 Venetian edition of Jerome's commentaries on the Old Testament, I think it almost impossible that Erasmus had not seen and read it. I cannot prove that Erasmus had read Zacchia's life of Jerome, but given its wide publication in four different editions at Rome in 1473, 1475, 1492 and 1495,<sup>484</sup> in addition to a 1473 Neapolitan edition, it is at least possible that Erasmus was aware of this work. He could have easily found one of these editions, for example, during his months spent at Rome from late 1508 until after Easter in 1509, when he was able to read in the libraries of upper-crust churchmen as well as at the Vatican library.<sup>485</sup> For the same reasons, Leuker concludes that we cannot rule out that Erasmus had read Manetti's *De illustribus longevis* (*On Famous Men who Lived to a Great Age*), whose manuscript was well-known to contemporary readers at the Vatican library but which, unlike Zacchia's work, was never printed.<sup>486</sup>

Earlier in this thesis we have seen Erasmus' condemnation of prior lives of Jerome as well as his statement that no source could be better for writing Jerome's life than Jerome's writings or the writings of his contemporaries. By putting forward these ideas in his *exordium*, wittingly or not, Erasmus' approach was much like that of the twelfth-century churchman Maniacutia, who began his life of Jerome with these words:

Having read the life of Saint Jerome edited by many writers, I have found them on the one hand to have inserted many things in no way pertaining to his praise, and on the other to have left out many important things, and above all those things that were written by Jerome himself and which seem the most appropriate things to be read on his feast-day. For this reason I was moved by his example, he who removed from the Holy Scriptures what had been added by later translators, and who added what had been truly left out, to write his life. So I, even if unworthy of his style, tried to take from the works of the aforesaid writers, from the deeds of his life and from the writings of other saints...so that from

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<sup>484</sup> Babinger, 'Laudivius Zacchia', 23.

<sup>485</sup> See Manilio Dazzi, *Aldo Manuzio e il dialogo veneziano di Erasmo* (Vicenza: N. Pozza, 1969), 104.

<sup>486</sup> Leuker, 'Eine Kritische', 136-137.

these many things...I might take out as much as I can and produce something for those who would like to know what has been written in various works about this holy man and about his virtues.<sup>487</sup>

Maniacutia then defended his work by citing a miracle, remarking that should anyone think overbold his efforts to re-write Jerome's life, 'he should pay heed to the devotion that I owe Jerome, who, when my mother bore me in her womb, delivered me from the clutches of death'.<sup>488</sup> Maniacutia's belief in Jerome's miraculous intercession to save him should not surprise us any more than Erasmus' belief that Saint Geneviève had helped to save him from a fever in Paris when doctors had failed him.<sup>489</sup> Maniacutia's belief in the communion of saints and in their intercession did not stop him – any more than it stopped Erasmus – from wanting to write a better, truthful life of Jerome by drawing from Jerome's own letters. We see another similarity between the lives of Erasmus and of Maniacutia in the subheadings to their lives' titles. In the subheading to his *Beati Hieronymi Vita*, Maniacutia claimed that his work had been 'put together especially from [Jerome's] own writings and likewise from the tracts of Saints Augustine, Damasus, Gregorius, Gelasius and others'. Erasmus' subheading advertised that he had drawn his *Life* 'mostly from [Jerome's] own letters'. Even the words that Maniacutia and Erasmus used in their titles are remarkably alike.<sup>490</sup> As did Erasmus, Maniacutia expressed his disapproval of prior lives and his wish to get to the 'real' Jerome by

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<sup>487</sup> *Beati Hieronymi Vita* in 1497-1498 Venetian *Opera divi Hieronymi* (hereafter cited at 1497-1498 Maniacutia), f. 2r: Beati Hieronymi vitam diversis auctoribus aeditam cum legissem, comperi eos inseruisse quaedam non magnopere ad eius praeconium pertinentia, rursum quam opportuna plurima omisisse, et ea maxime quae ab eodem suis tractatibus indita in eius festo legi congrua videbantur. Unde eiusdem provocatus exemplo, qui in divinis voluminibus ea quae ab antiquis translatoribus addita fuerant amputavit, quae vero praetermissa readdidit, tentavi. Et ego licet ut meritis ita et stilo impar tam ex scriptis praefatorum auctorum, quam ex factis eius et aliorum sanctorum assertionibus, quae ea congruere videbantur excerpere, et feriatim ut oportebat instruere. Ut ex multis quasi unum corpus efficiens labores eorum sublevare aliquatenus possem, qui ea quae de vite et virtutibus sancti viri per diversa sunt digesta volumina habere sine taedio voluissent.

<sup>488</sup> 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 2r: In quo si temeritas repraehenditur, attendatur devotio quae ei non immerito debeo, qui matrem meam cum me haberet in utero a mortis periculo liberavit.

<sup>489</sup> See Allen 50 (to Nicholas Werner, about January 1497), 3-7: Nuper in quartanam incideramus, sed convaluimus confirmatique sumus non opera medici, tametsi adhibeamus, sed unius divae Genovefae, virginis nobilissimae, cuius ossa penes canonicos regulares servata cotidie monstris choruscant et adorantur: nihil illa dignius, mihi salutaris.

<sup>490</sup> 1497-1498 Maniacutia: Incipit vita sancti Hieronymi presbyteri collecta eius tractatibus, Augustini, Damasii, Gelasii, Gregorii, Eusebii et aliorum sanctorum patrum. Compare this title with that found in VH (page 134 in *Erasmi opuscula*): Eximii Doctoris Hieronymi Stridonensis Vita ex ipsius potissimum litteris contexta per Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum.



looking closely at his writings and at writings of his contemporaries.<sup>491</sup> Looking at this evidence, Rice himself, as we have seen, claimed that Maniacutia and Erasmus shared the same historical methods.<sup>492</sup>

Writing about three centuries after Maniacutia, in the introduction to his life of Jerome, Laudivio Zacchia made statements whose similarities to those found in the opening paragraphs of Erasmus' *Life* are even more remarkable:

Since you have often asked me, Francis, to bring to light the life of Jerome, I myself began to wonder greatly at how poorly it has been treated by the passage of time and by the neglect of our elders, who were wholly and always ungrateful towards Jerome and covered his divine praises with silence. Only a few men have left behind some most obscure and childish things written about him. Indeed, if he had not through his own works been made famous throughout the whole world, he would now be ignored in our times. Moved by anger at these things, I cannot any longer allow him to dwell in obscurity.<sup>493</sup>

After having upbraided the carelessness of former times and the 'obscure' and 'childish' things hitherto written about Jerome, Zacchia, much as Erasmus did, lamented that pagan Classical authors such as Plato and Aristotle were read more than Jerome in his day:

For if Plutarch wrote the histories of troops, he embellished it with the speech of the Romans, and Pliny led wars and also decorated the accounts of what he did with eloquence. But their eloquence only decorated the deeds of short-lived mortals, and therefore their glory remains confined to short-lived mortals. How much better I think it is, therefore, to write the praises of Jerome, his life, his studies and his holiness. Indeed we read Plato and Aristotle every day, who nevertheless never learned or taught anything aside from human things. Jerome truly was the interpreter of all peoples and languages, and he pursued divine as well as human studies.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> Maniacutia's authorship of this life was proven in the 1920s. See André Wilmart, 'Nicolas Manjacoria: Cistercien à Trois-Fontaines', in *Revue Bénédictine* 33 (1921): 138.

<sup>492</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 129-130.

<sup>493</sup> 1495 Zacchia, page marked 'a ii', r: Cum tuo saepe hortatu Francine Hieronymi vitam in lucem efflagitares, coepi mecum prius ipse mirari vehementer hanc sive maiorum negligentia seu culpa temporum post habitam esse. Qui omnino studiorum ingrati quanta semper in Hieronymo fuere, divinas eius laudes silentio duxerint. Licet pauci admodum obscure quaedam nimis, ac ieiune de eo scripta reliquere. Ut nisi suis ipse laudibus toto orbe clarius haberetur nostris adhuc ignoraretur Hieronymus. Quovis rei indignitate permotus, non passum sum diutius hunc in obscuro versari.

<sup>494</sup> 1495 Zacchia, page 'a ii', r: Nam si Plutarchus Graecorum historias, simul et Romanorum oratione complexus est, et Plinius summos duces belli, rebus a se gestis illustres eloquentia tamen ornaverit. Quorum breves inter mortales eloquentiam tamen ornaverit. Quorum breves inter mortales gloria censeatur. Quanto sane rectius existimarim Hieronymi laudes vitam studia, ac morum sanctitate perscribere. Platonem enim et Aristotelem quottidie legimus, qui nil tamen nisi humanum aut ipsi didicerant, aut alios instituere. Hieronymus vero omnium gentium paene ac linguarum interpres, divina simul atque humana consecutus est studia.

Although Erasmus did not make this observation in his own introduction, we have already seen that later in his *Life* Erasmus echoed Zacchia's accusation that Aristotle was read more than Jerome in his day, as well as his claim that Jerome's literary merits, to say nothing of his spirit, outdid those even of Cicero.<sup>495</sup> In his introduction Zacchia also praised Jerome, exactly as Erasmus did, by showing that he outdid the best of what pagan Antiquity could muster. But whereas Erasmus only put Jerome before Cicero,<sup>496</sup> Zacchia praised Jerome over many great men of pagan Antiquity: in his continence Jerome outdid Cato, Aristides and Socrates; Jerome's wisdom was greater than that of Pythagoras and of Apollonius, and his eloquence was such that even Cicero and Demosthenes could not hold a candle to it.<sup>497</sup> It may be coincidence, but Erasmus also cited Pythagoras, Apollonius and Plato in his *Life* as 'most praiseworthy men' and remarked that the study of their works helped Jerome to forge his path to greatness.<sup>498</sup> Zacchia upbraided the 'negligence' of 'ungrateful scholars' and claimed that 'no one had yet been found who could render Jerome the thanks due to him'.<sup>499</sup> Erasmus also lamented that Jerome had as of yet found no worthy biographer. Even if such similarities are wholly owing to chance, it is clear that before Erasmus was ever born, many others shared the concerns about Jerome's prior biographies which he put forward in his *Life*.

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<sup>495</sup> VH 1168-1171.

<sup>496</sup> VH 1440-1445.

<sup>497</sup> 1495 Zacchia, page marked 'a ii', r/v: Cathonis quoque et Aristidis virtutem et Socratis continentiam. Idem incredibili studio superavit. Iure etiam Pythagore Appollonio caeterisque sapientibus anteposendus. Quos nil nisi ad pervestigandas naturae causas secretaque rerum in longinqua maris spatia ac terrarum orbem pervagatos accepimus. Ad hiis vero novos non solum adiisse populos, remotissimasque gentes aut loca perlustrasse, memoria proditum est. Sed divinarum etiam rerum studio ad veram homines sapientiam instituit. Quando nec in Cicerone vis maior unquam dicendi, seu in Demosthene copiae emanavit. Quin tot etiam Phoenicum, Graecorum, Arabum, Caldeorum, Hebraicas interpretationes, aut nostras fecit aut meliores reddidit, et qui suo consilio Christianum rem publicam fide, doctrina, auctoritate diu labentem confirmavit.

<sup>498</sup> VH 264-268: Igitur in profanis litteris, quas quidam saeculares vocant, ad plenum eruditus, ad graviora studia iam adiiciens animum hac etiam parte laudatissimos viros est imitatus, velut Pythagoram, Platonem, Apollonium, ut lustrandis regionibus sapientiae suppellectilem redderet auctiorem.

<sup>499</sup> 1495 Zacchia, page 'a ii', v: Quamobrem mihi non solum negligentia accusandi quam ingrati studiorum habendi. Sunt qui tam tot quam admirabili Hieronymi laudes in obscuro versari tam diu passi videntur. Qui cum multorum ipse virtutes ac gesta clarissimorum hominum oratione illustraverit, neminem adhuc reperit qui acceptas ei gratias referret.

In all of the writings about Jerome at which we have looked, each of them begins by citing, directly or indirectly, Jerome's *De viris illustribus* (*Catalogue of Famous Men*). In order to show that many prior lives of Jerome began with words and ideas which are remarkably alike, in the below paragraph I shall cite the first sentence or few sentences of these lives, beginning with the late-Antique Pseudo-Gennadius and moving forwards in time up to Erasmus' day. I shall also include two texts treating Jerome's life that date from Erasmus' lifetime: Hartmann Schedel's (1440-1514) *Liber Chronicorum* (*World Chronicle*) and Marcus Marulus' (1450-1524) life of Jerome from the 1500s, unpublished but dedicated to Leo X, to whom Erasmus first intended to dedicate his *Life*.<sup>500</sup>

Pseudo-Gennadius (5-7th century): Jerome was born in the town of Stridon, which, overthrown by the Goths, once neighboured Dalmatia and Pannonia. He was born to his father Eusebius and as a child in Rome took on the clothes of Christ. There he was instructed in Greek and Latin letters in his tender age. In the grammatical art he had Donatus for his teacher, in rhetoric Victorinus the orator.<sup>501</sup>

*Plaerosque nimirum* (7-10th century): Holy Jerome sprang from a noble family, from his father named Eusebius from the town of Stridon, which, overthrown by the Goths, once neighboured Dalmatia and Pannonia.<sup>502</sup>

Maniacutia's *Beati Hieronymi Vitam* (12th century): Therefore Saint Jerome was born unto his father Eusebius, as he himself puts forward in his book *De viris illustribus*, in the twenty-sixth year of the great Emperor Constantine in the town of Stridon, which, overthrown by the Goths, once neighboured Dalmatia and Pannonia. He went with his parents to Rome in his boyhood and was given over to great men in order to be taught. In grammar he had Donatus for his teacher, in rhetoric Victorinus.<sup>503</sup>

Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale* (13th century): Jerome, the son of Eusebius, baptized as a boy at Rome and most fully learned in Greek, Latin and Hebrew letters, long kept the life and the habit of monks. And always therefore keeping purity of mind and abstinence of the flesh he has left for all after him great examples of holiness.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> For more information about this life of Jerome and its critical text please see Darko Novakovic's work in *Colloquia Maruliana* 3 (1994): 5-66.

<sup>501</sup> Pseudo-Gennadius in PL 22, 177: Hieronymus natus in oppido Stridonis, quod a Gothis eversum, Dalmatiae quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit, patre Eusebio natus est. Vestem Christi puer Romae suscepit, ibique litteris Graecis ac Latinis a primaevo eruditus est. In arte quidem Grammatica Donatum habuit praeceptorem, in Rhetorica autem Victorinum oratorem.

<sup>502</sup> *Plaerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 201: Beatus igitur Hieronymus, nobili genere ortus, patre vero Eusebio nomine, oppido Stridonis, quod a Gothis eversum, Dalmatiae quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit.

<sup>503</sup> 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 2r: Sanctus igitur Hieronymus patre Eusebio genitus est, sicut ipse in libro *De viris illustribus* astruit, vigesimo sexto anno imperii magni Constantini in oppido Stridonis, quod a Gothis eversum Dalmatiae quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit. Qui cum parentibus in pueritia Romam veniens, viris insignibus traditur instruendus. Nam in grammatica Donatum habuit praeceptorem, in rethorica Victorinum.

<sup>504</sup> *Speculum historiale* cited from 1494 Venetian edition (1494 *Speculum*), f. 198r/v: Hieronymus Eusebii filius Romae puer baptizatus, litteris Graecis et Latinis et Hebraeicis plenissime eruditus monachorum vitam et habitum diu tenuit, et semper virgo permanens et puritatem mentis et abstinentia corporis omnibus post futuris eximia sanctitatis exempla reliquit.

Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (c.1260 ?): Jerome, the son of Eusebius a nobleman, came from the town of Stridon, which bordered Dalmatia and Pannonia. He, still a boy, went to Rome and became fully learned in Greek, Latin and Hebrew letters. In the grammatical art he had Donatus for his teacher; in rhetoric he had Victorinus the orator.<sup>505</sup>

Manetti's *De illustribus longevis* (1430s): Jerome the priest was born to Eusebius his father in the town of Stridon, which once neighboured Dalmatia and Pannonia and, as he says, was overthrown by the Goths. As a young man in Rome, he was first the student of a certain Donatus, a famous grammarian in those times.<sup>506</sup>

Zacchia (1440s): Jerome's father was Eusebius, who, born to noble rank, at some point exercised the authority of the empire in Stridon, which long ago was situated between the borders of Pannonia and Dalmatia. After the war with the Goths it was totally razed. In this town, once his father had reached the highest place of power and of dignity of the republic, he took care that his son, who then was of pious character and seemed to have been born for great things, be instructed in literature and in good arts.<sup>507</sup>

Schedel's *Liber Chronicorum* (1480s): Jerome, a most holy man and a most famous doctor of the holy Roman Church, a cardinal priest, was born to Eusebius his father in the town of Stridon which, overthrown by the Goths, neighboured Dalmatia and Pannonia. He, famous throughout the whole world for his doctrine and learning, established himself in the city of Bethlehem in Palestine and made it shine as brightly as he himself helped the Church of God with his life and with his writings.<sup>508</sup>

Trithemius' *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* (1490s): Jerome the priest and monk, born to his father Eusebius in the town of Stridon, was a man most learned in secular letters and in holy Scriptures, most learned among all the doctors, famous for his knowledge of many languages, an interpreter of holy law, a most forceful hammer and slayer of heretics.<sup>509</sup>

Marcus Marulus (1507): Jerome the priest (as he calls himself at the end of his book that he entitled *De viris illustribus*), was born to Eusebius his father in the town of Stridon, which, overthrown by the Goths, once neighboured Dalmatia and Pannonia. He went together with his parents to Rome as an adolescent and henceforth devoted to the study of letters he had Donatus for his teacher in grammar and Victorinus for his teacher in rhetoric.<sup>510</sup>

<sup>505</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 33r: Hieronymus Eusebii viri nobilis filius ab oppido Stridonis quod Dalmatiae et Pannoniae confinia tenet, extitit oriundus. Hic adhuc iuuenis Romam adiit et litteris Graecis, Latinis et Hebraicis plene eruditus est. In arte grammatica Domnatum habuit preceptorem, in rethorica autem Victorinum oratorem.

<sup>506</sup> Manetti cited from Leuker, 'Eine kritische', 124: Hieronymus presbyter patre natus Eusebio ex oppido Stridonis, ut ipse dicit, quod, a Gothis eversum, Dalmatiea quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit, Donati cuiusdam insignis per ea tempora grammatici adolescens Rome primum discipulus exitit.

<sup>507</sup> 1495 Zacchia 1473, page 'a iii', r: Hieronymo pater fuit Eusebio, qui nobili genere natus Stridonis summam imperii aliquando gessit, quae olim inter Pannonias ac fines Dalmatiae sita, bello post Gothorum funditus deleta est. In qua urbe cum pater summos rei publicae magistratus ac dignitatis locum obtinisset Hieronymum qui tunc pie indolis optime ad summa natus videbatur litteris ac bonis artibus institui curavit.

<sup>508</sup> 1497 Schedel, f. 152r: Hieronymus vir sanctissimus ac doctor celeberrimus sanctae ecclesiae Romanae, cardinalis presbyter natus patre Eusebio oppido Stridonis quod a Gothis eversum Dalmatiae quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit. Is toto orbe doctrinis ac scientia clarus apud Bethleem civitatem Palestine situs eam radiabat quantum enim iste iuverit ecclesiam dei vita et scriptis.

<sup>509</sup> 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, f. 17r: Hieronymus presbyter et monachus patre natus Eusebio ex oppido Stridonis, vir in secularibus litteris valde eruditus, et in divinis Scripturis inter omnes doctores eruditissimus, multarum linguarum peritia insignis, sacrae legis interpret, haereticorum malleus et expugnator fortissimus.

<sup>510</sup> See Darko Novaković's critical text of Marcus Marulus' 1507 *Vita Divi Hieronymi* in *Colloquia Maruliana* 3 (1994): 26: Hieronymus presbyter (ut ipse de se testatur in calce libri illius quem *De viris illustribus* inscripsit) patre Eusebio natus, oppido Stridone, quod a Gothis eversum Dalmatiae quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit, una cum parentibus Romam venit. Puerullus adhuc litterarum studiis traditus grammatica Donatum habuit praeceptorem in rethorica Victorinum.

Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* 1516: Now our eminent subject was born in 331 AD during the reign of the emperor Constantine in the town of Stridon. Stridon had once been located near the border of Dalmatia and Pannonia and even then, according to the testimony of Jerome himself in his *De viris illustribus*, had been destroyed by the rapacious Goths.<sup>511</sup>

The similarities of these first sentences of lives of Jerome stretching from late Antiquity to the sixteenth century are unmistakable. Almost all of these lives either directly (Erasmus, Manetti, Maniacutia) or indirectly (Zacchia, Trithemius, Schedel, Voragine, *Plaerosque nimirum*, Pseudo-Gennadius) cited Jerome's *De viris illustribus* in order to show that Jerome was born in Stridon, a town later overthrown by the Goths. With the exception of Erasmus' *Life*, all these lives also began by mentioning Jerome's father Eusebius, which Erasmus did later in the *Life*'s first paragraph and in the second paragraph. In their first sentences Trithemius, Zacchia, Manetti, Voragine, Maniacutia and Pseudo-Gennadius also pointed out Jerome's great learning. Zacchia, Erasmus and the author of *Plaerosque nimirum* all soon brought Victorinus and Donatus into Jerome's story. Save for Erasmus' *Life* and for *Plaerosque nimirum*, all of these lives stressed Jerome's great learning in their first sentences, which Erasmus and the author of *Plaerosque nimirum* stressed in due course. That eleven lives of Jerome, of all shapes and sizes and spanning eight centuries, shared so many themes, sources and wording in their first few sentences cannot be chalked up to chance. Together they make for an outstanding and far-reaching example of how all these writers were most probably drawing from each other or from many of the same sources, including Jerome's writings. Below we shall be looking in greater detail at how these writers treated three major topics in their stories of Jerome's life: Jerome's learning, his great deeds for Christ and his battles against heretics. From looking at how their lives of Jerome mirrored each other we shall come away with a clearer idea of some features of the narrative tradition in which these lives fit.

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<sup>511</sup> VH 136-140: Natus est igitur vir eximius Hieronymus, anno ab orbe redempto trecentesimo primo, sub Imperatore Constantino in oppido Stridonis, quod iam tum a Gothis omnia populantibus eversum fuisse, testis est ipse in Catalogo Scriptorum illustrium, olim Dalmatiae Pannoniaeque confinium.

Without fail, each of these lives emphasized Jerome's great learning. Erasmus, Zacchia and the author of *Plaerosque nimirum* even used the same word, *eximius*, in order to describe Jerome as a 'great doctor' (*eximius doctor*) of the Church, and we see similar use of this word in many other examples before Erasmus.<sup>512</sup> Trithemius, as did Erasmus, emphasized that Jerome was not only a man 'most learned in pagan letters', but also 'most learned among all the doctors when it came to Scriptures' and 'of great learning in many languages'. For the Abbot of Sponheim, Jerome was the 'most forceful hammer and slayer of heretics', a 'true Evangelical servant' and the 'most fruitful of all the doctors of the Church'.<sup>513</sup> Manetti stressed that of this 'most famous and most holy' man's great deeds, foremost was that 'he had written so many and so great books, that it might seem that he had done nothing else for his whole lifetime but think about the study of letters'.<sup>514</sup> Maniacutia referred to Jerome as the 'glorious doctor' (*mirabilis doctoris*) and the 'worshipful doctor' (*venerandi doctoris*).<sup>515</sup> He also quoted Augustine, who praised Jerome in his *Contra Iulian*

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<sup>512</sup> See the title of VH (page 134 in *Erasmi opuscula*): *Eximii doctoris Hieronymi Stridonensis vita ex ipsius potissimum litteris contexta per Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum*. See also VH 573-575; VH 1235-1240. See 1495 Zacchia (colophon on last page of life of Jerome, page not marked): *Finit vita eximii doctoris sancti Hieronymi edita per Laudivium equitem Hierosolimitanum*. See *Plaerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 209: *Dum igitur niteremur ostendere, quid volente Deo fieri possit: quid vero illo nolente fieri non viveret, et ut veridico eximioque doctori, cui quoad viveret, in omni scientia se comparare nemo audebat, non usurparet vaniloquus detrahere quispiam, coepto ab ordine longius sumus digressi*. See also the '*Ymnus ad Nocturn*' cited in Joseph Klapper, 'Aus der Frühzeit des Humanismus. Dichtungen zu Ehren des hl. Hieronymus', in *Bausteine: Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Max Kock* (Breslau: Verlag von Preuß und Jünger, 1926), 274: *Chorus fidelium coetus angelici/Pangat praeconium sancti Hieronymi/Cultoris eremi, fidelis Domini/Et doctoris eximii*.

<sup>513</sup> 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, f. 17r/v: *Hieronymus presbyter et monachus patre natus Eusebio ex oppido Stridonis, vir in secularibus litteris valde eruditus, et in divinis Scripturis inter omnes Doctores eruditissimus, multarum linguarum peritia insignis, sacrae legis interpres, haereticorum malleus et expugnator fortissimus. Hic est verus dispensator Evangelicus, fidelis et prudens, qui proferens de thesauro suo nova et vetera, dansque in tempore spiritalis tritici mensuram conservis suis, Hebraeos superbos spoliavit, humilesque ditavit Latinos. Hic et Ecclesiae Christi doctor egregius...Inter omnes enim ecclesiae doctores, nullus plus Hieronymo profuit, qui praeter innumera opuscula vetus testamentum de hebraico in latinum transtulit, ac novum ad graecam veritatem correxit, atque legendum Ecclesiae fideliter obtulit*.

<sup>514</sup> Manetti cited in Leuker, 'Eine kritische', 125: *Caeterum inter admirabilia quaedam clarissimi simul atque sanctissimi viri gesta duo dumtaxat caeteris digniora mecum ipse considerans, magnam tanti viri excellentiam satis admirari non possum. Primum enim tot tantaque volumina conscripsit, ut nihil aliud umquam toto vitae suae tempore quam de litterarum studiis excogitasse videatur*.

<sup>515</sup> 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 5r.

(*Against Julian*)<sup>516</sup> for being ‘learned in Hebrew as well as in Latin and Greek eloquence’ and no less for the eloquence of his books, which ‘shined like the sun’s brightness from the East into the West’.<sup>517</sup> Voragine used these same words as well as others from Augustine and from Prosper of Aquitaine in order to praise Jerome’s great learning put to the Church’s service.<sup>518</sup> Using the word *eximius* to describe Jerome as a doctor centuries before Boniface VIII (c.1235-1294-1303) officially declared Jerome a doctor of the Church in 1295, the writer of *Plaerosque nimirum* labelled Jerome the ‘great and truth-telling doctor to whom, as long as he was alive, no one dared to compare himself’.<sup>519</sup> Sharing ideas and often terminology, all of these writers of Jerome’s life agreed that the saint was a model for the combination of holy and of worldly learning and of how to put both to the Church’s service, much as Petrarch suggested in one of his poems in Jerome’s honour.<sup>520</sup>

For all of the above writers, such learning came from books, or codexes. Many of these lives of Jerome recounted that during his first trip to the East, the saint moved his sizeable library from Rome to the Holy Land. Erasmus, the *Legenda Aurea* and *Plaerosque*

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<sup>516</sup> See Augustine’s *Contra Iulianum* 1, 7 (34) in PL 44, 665: His tot ac tantis molibus virorum sanctorum doctorumque vallatus, adhuc causam nostram putabis nullum assertorem de tanta multitudine invenire potuisse? An tantam consensionem sacerdotum catholicorum, conspiracyem dicturus es perditorum? Nec sanctum Hieronymum, quia presbyter fuit, contemnendum arbitreris, qui Graeco et Latino, insuper et Hebraeo, eruditus eloquio, ex occidentali ad orientalem transiens Ecclesiam, in locis sanctis atque in litteris sacris, usque ad decrepitam vixit aetatem; omnesque vel pene omnes qui ante illum aliquid ex utraque parte orbis de doctrina ecclesiastica scripserant legit, nec aliam de hac re tenuit prompsitque sententiam.

<sup>517</sup> 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 5r: Nec sanctum Hieronymum presbyterum contentendum arbitreris, qui Graeco et Latino insuper Hebraeo eruditus eloquio ex orientali ad occidentalem transiens ecclesiam iam in locis sanctis atque in litteris usque ad decrepitam vixit aetatem, cuius nobis eloquium ab oriente in occidentem ad instar solis lampas resplenduit.

<sup>518</sup> 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 34r: In quanta reverentia Augustinus eum habuerit patet in epistolis quas sibi misit. In una quarum ei tali modo scribit: ‘Domino dilectissimo et cultu sincerissimo caritatis observando atque amplectando Hieronymo Augustinus etc.’ Alibi quoque de eo scribit: ‘Sanctus Hieronymus presbyter graeco, latino et hebraeo eloquio eruditus in locis sanctis atque in litteris sacris usque ad decrepitam vixit aetatem, cuius nobis eloquii ab oriente in occidentem instar solis lampas resplenduit’. Beatus autem Prosper in suis chronicis de eo sic ait: ‘Hieronymus presbyter in Betlehem totus iam mundo clarus habitabat egregio ingenio et studio universae ecclesiae serviens’.

<sup>519</sup> See *Plaerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 209: Dum igitur niteremur ostendere, quid volente Deo fieri possit: quid vero illo nolente fieri non viveret, et ut veridico eximioque doctori, cui quoad viveret, in omni scientia se comparare nemo audebat, non usurparet vaniloquus detrahare quispiam, coepto ab ordine longius sumus digressi.

<sup>520</sup> See Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 21-22. See Petrarch’s poem cited in Klapper, ‘Aus der Frühzeit’, 272.

*nimirum* all cited exactly the same words from Jerome's letter *Audi filia* in order to show that Jerome transported to the Holy Land the library which he had gathered together at Rome 'with the greatest care' (*summo studio*). Zacchia used words very similar to the above accounts.<sup>521</sup> What is more, Erasmus, Zacchia and *Plaerosque nimirum* all cited the same source,<sup>522</sup> Jerome's letter *Schedulae quas misisti*, and used the saint's own words in order to praise his efforts to learn the Hebrew language from a Jewish teacher in Bethlehem.<sup>523</sup> In another example, of all writers of Jerome's life, only Erasmus challenged Jerome's 'Christian humanist' credentials by doubting that he had ever studied with Gregory Nazianzenus. But in order to tell Jerome's life, Erasmus, Zacchia, Manetti, Maniacutia and the author of *Plaerosque nimirum* all stressed the importance of what Jerome had taken from his studies in Constantinople and in Antioch, all drawing from the same sources, Jerome's *Third Book in Explanation of Isaiah*<sup>524</sup> or his letter *Schedulae quas misisti*,<sup>525</sup> for their information.<sup>526</sup> Only

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<sup>521</sup> VH 371-374: At non multo post Bonosi secessum et ipse Hieronymus, ordinatis domi rebus, conflato viatico, cum primis autem locupletissima bibliotheca summo studio comparata, Syriam adiit, Heliodoro tum itineris comite, tum propositi consorte. 1495 Zacchia, page before 'b i', r: Comparata igitur ingenti librorum Bibliothecam quam superioribus annis Roma tanto sibi in unum studio congesserat in Palestinam Syrie contendit Sed cum Cyprum insulam preternavigaret Constantiam urbem delatus est. 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 33v: Bibliothecam autem suam quam summo studio sibi condiderat clausam aliosque libros iterum relegens diem ieiuniis ducebat ad vesperum; multos autem ibidem discipulos coadunans in sancto proposito et translatione scripturarum quinquaginta quinque annis et sex mensibus desudavit et usque ad finem vite virgo permansit. *Plaerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 201: corpus et sola tantum ferens quae itineri utilia esse valere, una cum bibliotheca quam summo studio in praefata confecerat urbe, Hierosolymam propter regnum coelorum iuvenis militaturus advenit.

<sup>522</sup> VH 534-541: Horum neminem nominatim designat, praeter unum Bar hanina quem tamen post iam natu grandis adhibuit, qui illi Nicodemum quendam exhibebat, ut ipse scribit, quod nocturna hominis opera soleat uti, non tam ob eam causam quod puderet Christianum a Iudaeo discere (tantus enim erat ardor discendi ut undecumque discere magnificum et gloriosum existimaret), quam quod homo Iudaeus invidiam suae gentis declinaret, si rem Christianam adiuvere videretur. 1495 Zacchia (citation from Jerome): Putabant me homines discendi iam fine fecisse Hierosolymis quoque Rabanum ex Iudeis et Nicodemum sibi praeceptores adhibuit: qui cum suae gentis leges palam formidarent ad crebras noctis vigilias cum magno empti pretio docebant. 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 2v: Veni rursus Hierosolymam et Bethleem: quo pretio, quo labore, Baramam nocturnum habui praeceptorem. See the citation of Jerome in *Plaerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 203.

<sup>523</sup> Jerome, Letter 84, 3: Quo labore, quo pretio Baraninam nocturnum habui praeceptorem! Timebat enim Iudaeos, et mihi alterum exhibebat Nicodemum.

<sup>524</sup> For the text see PL 24, 91 C–92 A.

<sup>525</sup> Jerome, Letter 84, 3.

<sup>526</sup> VH 769-779: Quandoquidem illo factiosissimo saeculo vix quisquam eximie doctus haereseos suspicione carebat. Gregorium Nazianzenum praeceptorem suum appellat, et hoc interpretante se sacras didicisse litteras testatur. Verum ubi nam audierit hominem, aut quanto tempore, parum mihi compertum est. Nam is vitae mutavit institutum, et sponte cedens episcopi locum, ruri abditus, monachi vitam exegit, auctore Hieronymo in



Maniacutia and the author of *Plaerosque nimirum*, however, bothered to cite this source in their lives.<sup>527</sup> Not only did all these writers draw from the same sources in order to praise Jerome's untold learning, they also drew from each other. This is clear when Maniacutia introduced a quote from *Schedulae quas misisti* and used almost exactly the same words in order to frame this quote as did the author of *Plaerosque nimirum* before him.<sup>528</sup>

In addition to praising his learning, all the above writers emphasized Jerome's holiness. For Erasmus, Jerome's combination of learning and of holiness made him 'a great athlete of Christ'. In this description Erasmus used almost the same words as Zacchia, who called Jerome the 'most undefeated athlete of Christ's Church'.<sup>529</sup> Many of the above lives

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Catalogo vivorum illustrium. Apollinarium, Antiochenae apud Syros ecclesiae episcopum, frequenter audivit Antiochiae, et domesticam cum illo consuetudinem egit, adhortante Paula, et sumptum, ut conicio, partem suppeditante; verum id iam aestate provector. See chapter 5 in 1495 Zacchia. See Manetti cited in Leuker, 'Eine kritische', 124: Post aliquot deinde annos ibidem presbyter ordinatus magnam litterarum Graecarum cognitionem comparavit. Inde ad Gregorium Nazanzenum virum sui temporis eruditissimum in Constantinopolim concessit, ut ab eo in sacrarum scripturarum perceptione erudiretur. 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 2r/v: Igitur Hieronymus locis venerabilibus perlustratis pergit Constantinopolim ad audiendum venerabilem virum Gregorium Nazanzenum idem in tertio explanationum Isaiae libro meminit. Ubi propheta deum se vidisse testatur sic inquit: 'De hac visione cum essem Constantinopoli et apud virum eloquentissimum Gregorium Nazanzenum praeceptorem meum tunc eiusdem urbis episcopum sanctarum Scripturarum studiis eruditer. See *Plaerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 202: Gregorium namque Nazianzenum (ut idem in tertio explanationum Isaiae refert libro) didascalum, id est, magistrum suum fuisse testatur. Nam cum in praedicto Propheta ad eum venisset locum, in quo de Seraphim quiddam debuisse exponere, ita intulit, dicens: 'De hac visione ante annos circiter triginta, cum essem Constantinopoli, et apud virum eloquentissimum Gregorium Nazianzenum praeceptorem meum, tunc eiusdem urbis Episcopum, sacrarum Scripturarum studiis erudirer, scio me brevem dictasse subitumque tractatum, ut experimentum caperem ingenioli mei, et amicis iubentibus obedirem.'

<sup>527</sup> In Jerome's commentaries on the third book of Isaiah we read in PL 24, 89: *Et plena domus gloria eius*. De hac visione ante annos circiter triginta, cum essem Constantinopoli, et apud virum eloquentissimum Gregorium Nazianzenum, tunc eiusdem urbis episcopum, sanctarum Scripturarum studiis erudirer, scio me brevem dictasse subitumque tractatum, ut et experimentum caperem ingenioli mei, et amicis iubentibus obedirem. Ad illum itaque libellum mitto lectorem, oroque ut brevi huius temporis expositione contentus sit.

<sup>528</sup> 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 2v: Quid vero de huius viri indefesso studio et eleganti industria quam erga Graecos et Latinos, Hebraeos et Syros Caldeosque in discendo habuit, praestantius dici potest, quid quod ipsius ad Pammachium Oceanum missa profitentur verba dicentis. 'Dum esse iuvenis, miro discendi fervebam amore. Haec iuxta quorundam praesumptionem ipse me docui. Apollinarem audivi Antiochie frequenter et colui.' See *Plaerosque nimirum* PL 22, 202: Quid vero de huius viri eleganti industria, quam erga Latinos, et Graecos, Hebraeos, et Arabicos, Chaldaeosque in discendo elementorum apices habuit, praestantius dici potest, quam ipsius ad Pammachium et Oceanum missa profitentur verba dicentis: 'Dum essem, inquit, iuvenis, miro discendi ferebar ardore: nec iuxta quorundam praesumptionem ipse me docui. Apollinarium audivi Antiochiae frequenter, et colui.'

<sup>529</sup> VH 573-577: Porro quamquam hoc otium ille perpetuum optabat ut felicius ac tranquillius, tamen e re Christianorum omnium erat, tam insignem athletam Christi aliquando produci in arenam; neque committi, ut

portrayed Jerome's greatness by combining descriptions of his study with descriptions of his monastic rigours. For his part, Erasmus remarked that Jerome, 'by fasting, vigils and an unbelievable austerity in his whole life...curbed the rebellious flesh and the lustful desires of youth which kept breaking out, teaching the body to serve the spirit lest the emotions work against him in his effort to reach the heavenly life'.<sup>530</sup> Erasmus also emphasized that Jerome spent all his time between study and prayer, with little sleep, little food and no rest, allowing 'himself only the bare necessities of food and of sleep, always, day and night, he wrote, read, taught and prayed, to which the many books that he edited are witness'. In this respect his description of Jerome's Christian athleticism looks much like Trithemius' description of the ascetic Jerome.<sup>531</sup> For Zacchia, although Jerome 'outdid any of his contemporaries in learning and in eloquence', he also 'did all things rightly and lived in such a way that he not be soiled by any temptation' and 'beat down all the desires of the flesh'. For Zacchia it was important that Jerome not only pursued his great love for 'letters and for virtue' but also undertook noteworthy 'macerations of the body and abstinence' as well as continuous prayer.<sup>532</sup>

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tam eximium orbis lumen diutius sub modio conderetur. 1495 Zacchia, page 'b iii', r: Undique etiam haeretici a fronte et a tergo instabant, ut re iam ad hostes inclinata orthodoxorum acies premeretur, quae iam loco cesserat nisi invictissimus Ecclesiae Athleta Hieronymus. Originally used in reference to early Christian martyrs, by the fifteenth century the term 'athlete of Christ' (*athleta Christi*) was often used to refer to crusading Christian rulers. In Mediaeval times it was a title conferred on kings throughout Europe during their coronation rituals. See Walter Ullman, *Mediaeval Foundations of Renaissance Humanism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 33-34. See footnote 4.

<sup>530</sup> VH 475-481: Primum erat studium, adolescentiae lapsus lacrimarum imbre diluere, et laborum asperitate, veluti nitri acrimonia, contractas per aetatis incogitantiam sordes detergere. Inedia, vigiliis et incredibili totius austeritate vitae, rebellantem carnem et subinde repullulantem aetatis lasciviam coercere, corpus spiritui servire docens, ne quid obstreperent affectus coelestem molienti vitam.

<sup>531</sup> VH 484-488: Tempus omne studiis et orationibus partiebatur, bonam etiam noctium partem his operis addens; minima portio dabatur somno, minor cibo, nulla otio. Studii lassitudinem recreabat oratio, aut hymnus: mox velut integer ad intermissam lectionem redibat. See 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, f. 17v: Hic est Hieronymus Iesu Christi sincerus amator, qui nullum tempus ociose transiens, die ac nocte in lege Domini meditabatur, et vix corpori necessario somno indulto, semper diebus ac noctibus scripsit, legit, docuit vel oravit, quod testatur paene infiniti libri quos aedidit.

<sup>532</sup> 1495 Zacchia (see chapter 12): Genus vero orationis ut varium et multiplex elegantissimum secutus est, ut summo verborum ornatu ac summis crebre Platoni accederet. Cuius gravitatem et ingenii praestantia maxime inter philosophos admiratus est, et quem semper studiosissime emulabatur. Sic omnes sui saeculi homines doctrina atque eloquentia facile superavit, recteque omnia agendo vitam instituebat ut nullis pollutus illecebris aut contactum libidinum, voluptates corporis omnes abiecerit, sic inviolata est a se pudicitia proque omnes aetatis gradum conservata in ultimam usque senectutem virgo permansisse creditur. Quid peregrinationum labores aut innumerabiles inimicorum fraudes et insidias hostiumque commemorem: et quae praeterea ob

Likewise Manetti emphasized that Jerome, ‘a man whom I am not able to admire as he deserves’, wrote ‘so many books that he seemed to have done nothing else for his whole life but think up books’. On the other hand, Manetti also noted that Jerome led a life of ‘such austerity, chastised and mortified his body so much and prayed ceaselessly to God with so many tears shed that whoever notes these things would think that he could have had almost no time, or at very least little, for the study of letters’.<sup>533</sup> The *Legenda Aurea* likewise emphasized Jerome’s combination of learning and of strict austerities. Summing up his life, Voragine wrote that after four years in the Syrian desert, scene of his *Somnium*, Jerome went back down to Bethlehem: ‘surrounded by the library that he had collected with the greatest care and reading again and again other books, he fasted every day until evening. Joining together time and again with many of his disciples in this holy undertaking and in the translation of Scripture, he toiled for fifty-five years and six months and lived chastely until the end of his life’.<sup>534</sup> In remarkably similar ways, the above lives treated in the same breath Jerome’s scholarly activities and his penitential severities in order to highlight that Jerome’s holiness, penitence, rigour and discipline was as great as his learning. In this they all more or less accepted Jerome’s own descriptions of his life in the desert. Erasmus did, however, seem to be aware of the fact that Jerome had a considerable amount of company for a hermit whilst

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studia litterarum virtutisque amorem cum summo capitis discrimine adivit. Ieiunio vero et corporis macerationes, abstinentiam, nullamque orandi intermissionem praeteribo. Nam eius mihi laudandi desiderium augeri sentio minui facultatem.

<sup>533</sup> Manetti, cited in Leuker, ‘Eine kritische’, 125: Caeterum inter admirabilia quedam clarissimi simul atque sanctissimi viri gesta duo dumtaxat caeteris digniora mecum ipse considerans, magnam tanti viri excellentiam satis admirari non possum. Primum enim tot tantaque volumina conscripsit, ut nihil aliud umquam toto vitae suae tempore quam de litterarum studiis excogitasse videatur. Rursus tanta vite austeritate, tanta corporis castigatione ac vexatione, tantis denique orationibus ad deum cum lacrimis iugiter profusus usus est, ut qui haec animadverterit numquam fere ipsum nisi quibusdam parvis dumtaxat temporis reliquiis litterarum studiis vacare potuisse crediderit.

<sup>534</sup> See 1516 *Legenda Aurea*, f. 33v: Per quadriennium igitur ibidem paenitentia sic peracta ad Bethlehem oppidum remeavit ubi prudens animal ad praesepe Domini sese obtulit permansurum. Bibliothecam autem suam quam summo studio sibi condiderat clausam aliosque libros iterum relegens diem ieiuniis ducebat ad vesperum; multos autem ibidem discipulos coadunans in sancto proposito et translatione Scripturarum quinquaginta quinque annis et sex mensibus desudavit et usque ad finem vite virgo permansit. I have translated ‘ad finem vitae virgo permansit’ as ‘he lived chastely until the end of his life’ since Voragine accepted that Jerome had lost his virginity in his youth elsewhere in his life of Jerome.

in Syria. Recent scholarship has shown that Jerome lived not in a cave or in the desert during this time, but rather on part of his rich patron Evagrius' 'semi-rural estate'.<sup>535</sup> Erasmus repeated the traditional story of Jerome's withdrawal to the wilderness, noting, 'with a heart all aflame with zeal for service in the militia of Christ he withdrew far into the wild desert that forms a desolate boundary...uninhabited except by wild beasts and serpents and here and there groups of monks'. He also noted, however, that 'though Jerome was far off in the desert, Evagrius was a frequent visitor'.<sup>536</sup>

In fifteenth-century painting Jerome often holds a church in his hand, especially in the iconography of Jerome in the Veneto. According to Russo, this was in order to show Jerome's unflagging defence of Christian orthodoxy.<sup>537</sup> For many of the above writers, Jerome was also, to use the words of Trithemius, a bastion of orthodoxy and a 'hammer and a slayer of heretics'.<sup>538</sup> Erasmus, Zacchia, Maniacutia and *Plaerosque nimirum* all recounted that Jerome's age was one buzzing with great heresies against which Jerome waged a bitter, lifelong war. For Erasmus, Jerome's was a 'most quarrelsome' age in which even he could be suspected of heresy.<sup>539</sup> There had never been an age, moreover, more 'prone to dissension or more confused', and it was 'so contaminated by the errors and disagreements of the heretics that to remain orthodox required a considerable degree of skill'.<sup>540</sup> Erasmus showed in his *Life* that Jerome, in answer to the challenge of heresy, proved the most effective fighter

<sup>535</sup> Cain, 'Letters of Saint Jerome', 41.

<sup>536</sup> VH 397-403: Restitutus pristinae valetudini, toto pectoris ardore ad susceptam Christi militiam accinctus, procul in horridam solitudinem abdidit sese, quae inter Syros et Agarenos, nunc corrupto vocabulo Saracenos dictos, vastum limitem ducit, in quae praeter feras et serpentes et sparsim habitantium monachorum greges nullus incolebat, quamquam huc quoque semotum, crebro solitus est invisere Evagrius.

<sup>537</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 86-87.

<sup>538</sup> See 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, f. 17r. We see the image of the 'hammer of heretics' also in the *Hieronymianus*. See the poem *Laus Jeronimi* in Klapper, 'Aus der Frühzeit', 268-269.

<sup>539</sup> VH 769-770: Quandoquidem illo factiosissimo saeculo vix quisquam eximie doctus haereseos suspicione carebat.

<sup>540</sup> VH 834-841: Quoniam adversum multorum errores acerrime scripserat, nullus erat haeresiarcha qui non Hieronymum pro hoste duceret, quem quisque sibi male conscius etiam intactus, ut ait Horatius, horrebat et oderat aliorum exemplo territus. Nullum fuit unquam saeculum seditiosius neque confusius; et sic omnia contaminarant haeticorum errores ac dissidia, ut magnae cuiusdam artis fuerit orthodoxum esse.

against this age's heresiarchs,<sup>541</sup> among whom 'there was none that did not hold Jerome for his bitterest enemy'.<sup>542</sup> Zacchia also treated contemporary heresies at considerable length, emphasizing that 'in these times, with the greatest evil, the Arian heresy invaded Rome, as though a fire of loathesome wickedness had flared up in all Italy, such that many Christians not only openly left orthodoxy with ill effect, but also rocked the Church with internal seditions'.<sup>543</sup> In this time of 'great trial', in which the Roman Imperial court upheld heresy and the orthodox were tortured and oppressed, Jerome's 'faith and authority' came to the help of the 'Christian Republic'.<sup>544</sup> Maniacutia also stressed the onslaughts of heretics against the Church of Jerome's day and praised Jerome's role in fighting against them, remarking that 'there was no heretic who purged the Church or no heresy that bubbled up in that time which Jerome did not mow down with his sickle'. Maniacutia cited Jerome's foreword to his dialogue against the Pelagians and used Jerome's own words in order to praise him for never sparing an heretic, but always doing everything of his power 'so that the enemies of the Church became his enemies'.<sup>545</sup> For the writer of *Plaerosque nimirum*, at this time 'the Arian heresy had bespotted the Roman people through the work of Constantius Augustus', and it

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<sup>541</sup> VH 1212: Quis haereticorum dogmata refellit efficacius?

<sup>542</sup> VH 1562-1565: Nullum doctrinae genus est, quod hinc non queant adiuvari; nullum vitae institutum, quod huius praeceptis non formetur. Soli haeretici Hieronymum horreant et oderint, quos ille solos semper acerrimos hostes habuit.

<sup>543</sup> 1495 Zacchia (no page markings, see chapter 3): Hisce temporibus cum summa omnium pernitie accepto sceleris nepharii, Ariana haeresis velut quodam communi Italiae incendio urbem Romam invaserat, ut multi ex Christianis factionis adverse non solum ab orthodoxia palam descensissent, sed quodam occidentis fato imperium agitantem Ecclesiam intestinis seditionibus convellebant.

<sup>544</sup> 1495 Zacchia (no page markings, see chapter 3): Quod maxime constantis opera factum est, quin Arianos armis protegebat et partium studia secutus. Orthodoxos inter varios cruciatus et tormenta supplicio affecerat. Sed plusquam nostri penarum optarent dedit ille. Hac igitur tam insigni omnium periclitatione Hieronymi fides et autoritas in defensionem Christianae rei publicae erga omnes tum maxime declarata est, cuius facti preclara recordatio nostris non parum hominibus attulit adiumenti atque honestissima eius in re publica voluntatem ac magnitudinem animi: cum universi intuerentur res ad eum consensu omnium delata est, tantaque celeritate perfecit, ut attritis Arianorum viribus nostrorum animos non solum ad Catholice veritatis studia confirmarit, sed ab omni haereticorum incursu liberatos protexerit interim nullis etiam Hieronymus vigiliis ac laboribus parcere.

<sup>545</sup> 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 4v: Sed numquam his tantum haeresibus purgavit ecclesiam. Nulla unquam haeresis eius tempore pululavit, quam ipse falce suae eloquentiae non succiderit. Nunquam enim perpercit haereticis sicut ipsemet asserit, sed omni egit studio: ut hostes ecclesiae ei quoque hostes fierent. For original citation from the dialogue against the Pelagians see PL 23, 497 A: Adversum eos autem, qui me dicunt hoc opus inflammatum invidiae facibus scribere, breviter respondebo, numquam me haereticis pepercisse, et omni egisse studio, ut hostes Ecclesiae, mei quoque hostes fierent.

was for this reason that Jerome packed up his library and went to Jerusalem ‘as a young soldier ready to fight for the kingdom of heaven’.<sup>546</sup> Although with different words, Erasmus, Zacchia, Maniacutia and *Plaerosque nimirum* all stressed the danger of heresy in Jerome’s day and praised the saint for his great efforts to fight against it. Of all of these writers, it was Erasmus who most praised Jerome for his heroic combats against the snares of heretics.

To my knowledge, Erasmus differed from all prior lives of Jerome in his emphasis on the wickedness of Rufinus, to whom Erasmus ascribed a leading role in contemporary heretical movements. Indeed, Erasmus claimed that the old Arian heresy had merely come back to life under the name ‘Origenist’ and that Rufinus was this movement’s ‘leader’ and ‘ensign-bearer’.<sup>547</sup> More than forty times Erasmus brought up Rufinus in his *Life*, and always in an unflattering light.<sup>548</sup> Three times he labelled Rufinus a slanderer [*calumniator*], once he claimed that Rufinus ‘slandered’ Jerome<sup>549</sup> and at one point he claimed that the many hostile reactions to Jerome’s writings in his day were mostly due to Rufinus, even though many of Jerome’s writings were highly controversial and did not need Rufinus to stoke up a hostile reaction to them.<sup>550</sup> Elsewhere Erasmus called Rufinus a ‘most pestilential backbiter’<sup>551</sup> and

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<sup>546</sup> See *Plaerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 203: Ea procul dubio tempestate Romanum populum per Constantium Augustum Ariana haeresis maculabat. Idcirco ergo praedictus vir, occasione quam semper optaverat accepta, ut superius est dictum, relicta domo, parentibus, sorore, cognatis, et incluta ac gloriosissima Petri urbe, corpus et sola tantum ferens quae itineri utilia esse valere, una cum bibliotheca quam summo studio in praefata confecerat urbe, Hierosolymam propter regnum coelorum iuvenis militaturus advenit.

<sup>547</sup> VH 842-851: Verum in primis Arianorum factio, litteris, armis, et imperatorum praesidiis, totum Orientem, immo totum orbem in dissidium pertraxerat. Id mali utcumque sopitum, postea mutato cognomine per Origenistas renatum est, ut ante dixi, et in ipsam usque Romanam urbem mire irrepserat, non palam, sed cuniculis quibusdam sese furtim insinuans; cuius rei dux ac signifer Ruffinus Aquileiensis, cum quo puer puero Hieronymus arctissimam habuerat consuetudinem, et mirus quidam amor intercesserat: id quod facile liquet ex epistola cuius initium, ‘In ea mihi eremi parte.’

<sup>548</sup> Pabel remarks that Erasmus ‘was uncompromisingly ruthless towards Rufinus’ in the *Life*. See *Herculean Labours*, 209.

<sup>549</sup> VH 120-125; VH 725-731; VH 783-785; VH 809-815.

<sup>550</sup> Cain, ‘Letters of Saint Jerome’, 99-100.

<sup>551</sup> VH 671-674: Tum indies magis ac magis gliscentium Origenistarum adversum se invidiam: praesertim cum id temporis Ruffinus ageret in urbe, nunquam ille quidem sincerus amicus, ut ego sentio, tum vero insidiator pestilentissimus.

he taxed Gennadius for his praise of Rufinus,<sup>552</sup> as well as for possibly daring to criticize Jerome's treatment of him.<sup>553</sup> Erasmus also claimed that Rufinus was responsible for circulating letters falsely ascribed to Jerome in order to undermine his reputation.<sup>554</sup> This is only a small taste of Erasmus' writings against Rufinus in the *Life* and elsewhere in the commentaries, and on their account Godin is correct to see in Erasmus' *Life* a 'true *Contra Rufinum*'.<sup>555</sup> To show the extent of Erasmus' disdain for Rufinus, he praised Jerome for his 'Christian mildness' because he did not name Rufinus outright in polemical letters but rather wrote against Rufinus, after the latter's death, using for him fake names such as *Scorpio* ('Scorpion') or *Grunnius*, which means 'the grunter' or 'grunting pig'!<sup>556</sup> Writing about Jerome's second departure from Rome, Erasmus chalked Jerome's hasty departure up to the Origenists and to Rufinus' machinations when,<sup>557</sup> as Godin and others rightly note, the Origenist controversy had broken out over ten years before the events that Erasmus describes in this passage.<sup>558</sup> Erasmus' great dislike of Rufinus led him to make historical mistakes and to an exaggerated presentation that none of Jerome's other biographers shared.<sup>559</sup> In his entry for Rufinus in his *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, Trithemius praised Rufinus as an 'eloquent' man 'most learned in the sacred Scriptures and as thoroughly learned in Greek as in Latin',

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<sup>552</sup> See Gennadius in PL 58, 1069-1070. He wrote of Rufinus: Rufinus, Aquileiensis presbyter, non minima pars fuit doctorum Ecclesiae et in transferendo de graeco in latinum elegans ingenium habuit...

<sup>553</sup> VH 876-883: Quo magis admiror quid Gennadio venerit in mentem, qui non contentus Ruffinum immodicis vexisse laudibus, huiusmodi coronidem adiecit, ni fallor, in Hieronymum: 'Sed et obtrectatori opusculorum suorum respondit duobus voluminibus, arguens et convincens se Dei intuitu et Ecclesiae utilitate, auxiliante Domino, ingenium agitavisse; illum vero aemulationis stimulo incitatum, ad obloquium stilum vertisse.'

<sup>554</sup> VH 919-924.

<sup>555</sup> Godin, 'Érasme biographe', 360.

<sup>556</sup> This passage is from Jerome's letter *Nihil Christiano felicius*. See Jerome, Letter 125, 18. VH 1116-1125: Multa sciens ac prudens supprimit, pudori Christiano malens obsequi quam animo lacessito. Velut in epistola adversus Ioannem Hierosolymitanum, quantum tribuit suae verecundiae, quantum episcopi titulo, ut se reprimat? Et si quid incidit odiosius, saepe nomina supprimit; nonnumquam fictis abutitur vocabulis, velut in argument de matre et filia reconciliandis, in diaconum impudicum, in Susannam lapsam. Quin etiam in Ruffinum et huius socios, Grunnii, Luscii Lavinii, Calphurnii Lanarii, Scorpii, Canis Alpini, et id genus aliis aut fictis aut obscuris nominibus stomachatur.

<sup>557</sup> VH 666-674.

<sup>558</sup> Godin, 'Érasme biographe', 362.

<sup>559</sup> See CWE 61, page 250, note 90: The attack on Rufinus that follows is unjust. He was not in Rome at that time (382-385), nor had his friendship with Jerome yet been interrupted by the Origenist controversy.

who enjoyed among the Doctors of the Church ‘no small renown’. He remarked, moreover, that in later life Jerome and Rufinus re-established their friendship for good,<sup>560</sup> quite the opposite of Erasmus’ story, in which Jerome and Rufinus make up only the more violently to loathe each other later.<sup>561</sup> Schedel described Rufinus as a man ‘most famous and most learned’.<sup>562</sup> Maniacutia maintained that Rufinus was a ‘most religious man’, even though he did acknowledge that Jerome ‘fell out’ with Rufinus, ‘that most learned man and his colleague with whom he was wont to splash in the honeyed-water of the sacred Scriptures’.<sup>563</sup> Whereas Erasmus presented Rufinus as Christian Antiquity’s archvillain and wished his readers believe that the Origenist controversy between Jerome and Rufinus was of the greatest moment, Trithemius, Schedel and Maniacutia, among others, accepted Rufinus’ orthodoxy as well as his formidable learning and did not claim that Arianism and Origenism were the same things with different names. In this they agree more with Jérôme Labourt, editor of the French-Latin edition of Jerome’s letters, who has suggested that the controversy between Jerome and Rufinus was of minor importance to most Christians of this time.<sup>564</sup> I have dwelt on this point because Erasmus’ bias against Rufinus went against the grain of all contemporary interpretations and is something new and remarkable in the tradition of writing Jerome’s life. It is also a point on which he harped with equal zeal in his commentaries for

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<sup>560</sup> 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, 19r: Rufinus monachus et Aquileiensis Ecclesiae presbyter, vir eloquens et in divinis scripturis valde eruditus, graeco et latino peritus aeloquio, inter ecclesiasticos doctores non parvae opinionis fuit. Eius scripta licet multa sint tamen inter apocrypha computantur XV dis. Sancta romana, propterea quod in sanctissimum virum Hieronymum scripserit invectivas epistolas, sicut ex earum lectione intelligi potest. Sed postea in concordiam dilectionis fraternae redeuntes, facta sunt opuscula Rufini autentica, inquantum Hieronymi dictis non fuerint contraria. De scriptis ergo Rufini subiecta referuntur.

<sup>561</sup> VH 404-411.

<sup>562</sup> 1497 Schedel, f. 154r: Ruffinus Aquileiensis presbyter vir clarissimus atque clarissimus floruti ad quem Hieronymus nonnullas dederit epistolas. In quibus eum tanquam amicum dulcibus adloquitur verbis et ad charitatis perseverantiam exhortatur sed paulo post amicitiae perseverantia inter eos destitit. Hic itaque cum eruditus esset et si opus aliquid non ediderit tam in transferendo de graeco in latinum multum laboravit.

<sup>563</sup> 1497-1498 Maniacutia, f. 4v: Nam et Rufini viri eruditissimi suiue collegae cum quo mella sanctarum scripturarum consueverat lambere, ideo inimicitias dicitur incurrisse quia eum de arbitrii libertate prave sentientem vehementer correxerat. Cuius zelum pro fidei rectitudine romana Ecclesia adeo approbavit. Ut beatus papa Gelasius Scripturarum sagacissimus indagator eiusdem Rufini libros licet praeclaro sermone editos repudiare videatur. Hoc in suis decretalibus mandans. Rufinis vir religiosissimus plurimos ecclesiastici operis edidit libros. Nonnullas et scripturas interpretatur est.

<sup>564</sup> Jérôme Labourt, *Lettres*, volume 4 (Paris: Belles lettres, 1949-1963), 181-183.



the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>565</sup> Once again, in these commentaries we find Erasmus calling out and attacking heretics and heresy in Jerome's day, embodied as they were in his arch-villain, Rufinus. In this case it seems again that Erasmus had again let his commitments to the 'rhetorical truth' of Rufinus' wickedness get the better of his commitment to 'factual truth', to which many prior biographers of Jerome stuck more closely when it came to the quarrels between Rufinus and Jerome.

To close this chapter, I would like to point out that Erasmus, Trithemius, Manetti and *Plaerosque nimirum* all ended their lives of Jerome with a praise of important places in his life. Longest of these is Erasmus' praise, in which he exalted, among every other place that Jerome had visited over the course of his life, Stridon where he was born, Italy where he was educated, baptized to Christ and buried and, last but not least, 'Bethlehem doubly blessed, where Christ was born to this world, and where Jerome was born to heaven'.<sup>566</sup> Trithemius likewise echoed the idea of 'Bethlehem doubly blessed' and linked together Christ and Jerome at the end of his short life of Jerome. The Abbot of Sponheim wrote that in the same place where Jerome 'shined forth bright to the world' and 'died as a light to the world', there also had shined forth the 'true sun of justice, born among men'.<sup>567</sup> Manetti ended his short

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<sup>565</sup> For one of legion examples, see the *argumentum* to the letter *Paulus apostolus* in 1516 *Edition* III, f. 166r: Ruffinus subornaverat Palladium quendam Galatam, adversus Hieronymum qui illius interpretationem calumniaretur. Huius calumnias refellit, explicans officium veri interpretis. Imitatus est autem titulum Ciceronis, de optimo genere dicendi. See also the *argumentum* to *Sebesium nostrum* in 1516 *Edition* III, f. 148v.

<sup>566</sup> VH 1543-1561: Stridon sibi gratuletur, quae tamen eximium orbi lumen produxerit. Triplici nomine sibi gratuletur Italia; primum quod erudierit, deinde quod per baptismum genuerit Christo, postremo quod sanctissimi corpusculi pignus apud se servet. Hunc ut suum agnoscant Galliae, quas omnes sic peragravit, quasque tot libris nominatim dedicatis instituit. Hunc exosculetur Germania, quam unico licet volumine satis et docuit et nobilitavit. Hunc gemino nomine complectatur Graecia; primum ob linguae commercium; deinde quod orbis magistra huius viri litteris vicissim adiuta sit. Complectatur Aegyptus, quam toties invisit, quaeque ex doctissimo nobis reddiderit doctiorem. Amplectantur Arabes et Saraceni, quos sua vicinitate reddidit claros. Hunc colant Hebraei, quorum sermonem et litteras tantis sudoribus pararit. Hunc omnis quidem rapiat Syria, in qua magnam vitae suae partem exegit; sed praecipue Bethlehem bis felicissima, et quod in hac Christus natus sit mundo, et quod in eadem Hieronymus natus sit coelo.

<sup>567</sup> 1494 *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, f. 17v: Hic veritatis defensor, cultor virtutis, vitiorum acerrimus hostis, cum esset Ecclesiae Romanae presbyter, et scelera clericorum constanter argueret, eorum invidia secessit ex urbe, veniensque in Iudaeam gloriosum Domini visitavit sepulcrum, atque iuxta praesepe Bethleemiticum

life of Jerome by remarking that ‘the city of Stridon bore him, famous Rome taught him and sweet Bethlehem holds him.’<sup>568</sup> Rejecting the idea that Jerome’s body had been transported after his death to Rome’s patriarchal Basilica Saint Mary Major, a possibility which Erasmus seems to accept in his *Life*,<sup>569</sup> Manetti also put forward the idea of ‘sweet Bethlehem’ (*Bethlehem alma*). We find these same words at the end of *Plerosque nimirum*, and such similarities in words and in phrases are too marked to be a coincidence.<sup>570</sup> In their ends, as in their beginnings, from *Plerosque nimirum* to Erasmus’ *Life*, we see similarities in themes and in wording that point to an ongoing tradition of writing Jerome’s life of which these writers were aware and into which their lives fit. That Erasmus’ *Life* included several noteworthy breaks from and additions to this tradition does in no way mean that his *Life* was not part and parcel of it.<sup>571</sup>

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locum sibi habitationis constituens, toti mundo clarus innotuit, disponente id nimirum divina providentia, ut ibi lux mundi quiesceret, ubi verus sol iustitia hominibus nascendo innotuisset.

<sup>568</sup> Manetti, cited in Leuker, ‘Eine kritische’, 128: Et ut tandem totum Hieronymum uno versiculo brevissime comprehendam: Stridon oppidum genuit, Roma inclita erudit, Bethlehem alma tenet. Fuerunt et alii eiusdem nominis clarissimi quidem viri.

<sup>569</sup> VH 984-988.

<sup>570</sup> *Plerosque nimirum* in PL 22, 214: Igitur idem beatissimus, diebus vitae suae in spirituali opere irreprehensibiliter consummatis, nonagesimo octavo aetatis suae anno in Domino requievit. Bethlehem eum alma tenet iterum venturo Domino offerendum. Dormivit autem beatus Hieronymus anno imperii Theodosii iunioris duodecimo: imperante utique illo, cuius anni nec finientur: Qui vivit et regnat per immortalia saecula saeculorum.

<sup>571</sup> Pabel comes to a similar conclusion after his own analysis of printed editions of Jerome’s works in the Renaissance. See *Herculean Labours*, 114: ‘This necessarily comprehensive, but by no means exhaustive, bibliographic record of Renaissance printed editions of Jerome demonstrates that Erasmus was a part, albeit a vital part, of a larger culture of printing and editing Jerome. If Erasmus had read Pseudo-Cyril (VH 987), it is likely that he had read others.’

## PART I: CHAPTER VII

### THE *LIFE*'S SECONDARY SOURCES

During a conversation at Munich's Ludwig Maximilian University in March 2012, Dr. Heinrich Kuhn suggested to me that Mediaeval and Renaissance scholars were as worried as are historians today about using and engaging secondary sources. Never before had this seemingly simple idea come to me, but since then I have come to see more clearly Erasmus' use of and dependence on contemporary secondary scholarly literature. We see one outstanding example of this in Erasmus' *Annotations* for the 1516 Froben *New Testament*, in which he time and again cited Mediaeval commentators such as Nicholas of Lyra, Hugh of Saint-Cher and Thomas Aquinas, to say nothing of Lorenzo Valla's commentaries. In the foregoing chapter we have already treated this matter in part by looking at some prior lives of Jerome that Erasmus had clearly read. In this chapter we shall be looking more closely at the secondary works that Erasmus explicitly cited in his *Life*. From this we shall come away with a clearer understanding of the intellectual context in which Erasmus wrote the *Life* and in which contemporaries read and understood it.

Firstly, it is clear that Erasmus drew historical background and context for his *Life* from printed secondary sources. In the *Life* Erasmus condemned outright Mediaeval theologians such as Alessandro di Hales (c.1180-1245), Egidio Romano (1243-1316), his bugbear Duns Scotus (d.1308) and a contemporary of the first generation of humanists, Giovanni Capreolo (1380-1444), who wrote a book in defence of Thomas Aquinas'

theology.<sup>572</sup> In his *Life* Erasmus also cited a wide range of contemporary humanists and their works, pointing out by name Raffaele Maffei da Volterra (1451-1522), or ‘Il Volterrano’, Barolomeo Sacchi (1421-1481), or ‘Il Platina’, Flavio Biondo (1392-1463), Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457), Poliziano (1454-1494), Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481), Teodoro Gaza (1398-1475), Pomponio Leto (1428-1497), Ermolao Barbaro (1453-1493), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), Rolf Huysman (1443-1485), or Agricola, Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (1453-1505) and Giovanni Battista Pio (1460-1540). All these men except for Volterrano and Pio died long before Erasmus wrote the *Life* and all, save for Agricola, whom Erasmus only cited as an example of eloquence, were Italians. To use Rice’s words, ‘no humanist was a pagan,’ and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the ‘discovery, rediscovery and re-evaluation of Christian Antiquity’ was ‘an integral part of the more general humanist re-discovery and re-evaluation of ancient arts and letters’.<sup>573</sup> In his *Life*, as Erasmus engaged a well-established secondary literature in which Italian humanists had long interpreted Jerome’s writings. He used works that he criticized and works which he admired as sources and as guides. In this his methods were akin not only to those of ‘modern’ historians who rely heavily on secondary literature, but also to Mediaeval scholastic scholars.

The first two secondary sources that Erasmus cited in his *Life* were Volterrano’s *Commentariorum urbanorum libri* (*Book of Commentaries on the City*) and Platina’s *Vita Christi ac omnium pontificum* (*Life of Christ and of all the Popes*). In the sixteenth book of Volterrano’s *Commentariorum* – of which I have looked at the 1506 Roman edition that could have been available to Erasmus as well as the 1530 Hieronymus Froben edition – Volterrano included a lengthy write-up of the life of Jerome, the ‘prince of doctors’, and

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<sup>572</sup> See VH 1177-1198. Capreolo’s work was entitled *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*. See *Erasmi opuscula*, 178. See Morisi Guerra, *Vita di San Girolamo*, 148.

<sup>573</sup> Rice, ‘The Renaissance Idea of Christian Antiquity: Humanist Patristic Scholarship’, in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms and Legacy*, ed. Albert Rabil Jr. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 17.

pledged to write a brief account of his life drawing as much as possible from Jerome's own writings.<sup>574</sup> Volterrano was faithful to this pledge and most of his text comprised quotations from Jerome's works, including Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, his letter *Schedulae quas misisti*, his letter to Augustine *Tres simul epistolas* and his *Contra Rufinum*.<sup>575</sup> Volterrano included a long citation from the last work and a large text from Jerome's letter *Sebesium nostrum* in order to show how jealous men, heretics and the wanton-minded vexed Jerome until he left Rome for the Holy Land. Erasmus shared this interpretation in his *Life* in which, after outlining the machinations of Jerome's slanderers and their accusations against him,<sup>576</sup> he suggested that on their account Jerome left Rome, 'a city unworthy of him'.<sup>577</sup> According to Volterrano, after Jerome had, with 'the greatest care', packed up in a ship his library, 'without which he could not live', he stopped along the way to Jerusalem in order study with Constantinople's bishop, Gregorius Nazianzenus.<sup>578</sup> Soon after his departure from Rome, Paula and Eustochium followed him and later financed his scholarly and religious projects with their riches. Volterrano cited *Audi filia* in order to show that upon settling down in the Holy Land, Jerome first spent four years in solitude in the desert before living thereafter in Bethlehem among monks and with his 'friend the lion, about which many miracles are told', busying himself with 'divine reading and writing' until his death in 422.<sup>579</sup> Volterrano then

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<sup>574</sup> 1530 Volterrano, 183v-184r: Hieronymi doctorum principis vitam recensere, parergon [sic] fortasse fuerit, cum tot illustrium virorum sit mandata monumentis, quaedam tamen ex eius libris de se loquentis, praesertim ad eius litteras pertinentia, in medium adferam.

<sup>575</sup> See 1530 Volterrano, 183v-185v for the full life.

<sup>576</sup> VH 671-674 and compare with 1530 Volterrano, f. 184v-185r. For more on the story of Jerome's departure from Rome, where at this time he was formally condemned by an Ecclesiastical Court, see Cain, *Letters of Saint Jerome*, 118-125.

<sup>577</sup> VH 724-725: Hisce de causis Hieronymum tandem urbis odium cepit indignae tam eximii viri consortio.

<sup>578</sup> 1530 Volterrano, 185r: Igitur Hieronymus ab aemulis exagitatus, quod pariter bellum omnibus haereticis ac libidinis indixerit, eosque suos ac religionis communes hostes putaverit postquam in Asia aliquamdiu Gregorio Nazianzeno Graeco praeceptor operam in sacris libris dedisset, Hierosolymam secedere statuit.

<sup>579</sup> 1530 Volterrano, 185r: Itaque imposita tantum in navi bibliotheca quam summo labore paraverat quaque carere non poterat caeteris omissis soluit, sequentibus Paula et Eustochio quarum opibus et iuvabatur. Cumque apud Bethleem se reciperet quattuor annos in heremo fuit ut ipse testatur: 'Quotiens ego in illa vasta solitudine', et quae subsequuntur. Inter monachos versabatur comite leone, cuius nonnullae etiam portenta referuntur. ibique multos annos in caenobio lectionibus divinis simul et scriptionibus vacans, demum ex hac

directed readers to three apocryphal sources for more information about Jerome: the letters of Pseudo-Chromatius, Pseudo-Cyril's life of Jerome and Pseudo-Augustine's elegy of Jerome.<sup>580</sup> Volterrano closed his account of Jerome's life by stressing the saint's uncommon monastic rigour as well as his peerless learning, remarking that Jerome 'abstained wholly from all cooked meats and wine and was of such great learning that what he did not know, no man has ever known'.<sup>581</sup>

We have already looked at Erasmus' fiery criticism of an unnamed source about Jerome in his *Life*, which I believe was probably the *Transitus Beati Hieronymi*. Erasmus rued this source's harmful effects on contemporary understandings of Jerome:

This writer found his readers; he found those to quote him and, more amazingly, scholars like Platina and Volterrano, who, I suspect, never drew those quotations directly from him but had heard them in sermons or had only seen excerpted fragments.<sup>582</sup>

Trying to excuse both Volterrano and Platina by claiming that they had never read or had only skimmed sources which they cited, Erasmus had clearly read Volterrano's *Commentariorum* as well as Platina's *Vita Christi et omnium pontificum*. The latter was probably a source from which Erasmus drew in order to create his picture of the Church in Jerome's day. Platina's goal for his *Vita*, outlined in his introductory letter to Sixtus IV (1417-1471-1484), was to create 'true images of these famous men with whom we might

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vita in Domino migravit anno aetatis XCI pridie cal. october anno salutis CCCCXXII Theodosio minore et Honorio Imp.

<sup>580</sup> 1530 Volteranno, 185r: Opera eius, quod palam sint, explicare non oportet. Chromatii Aquileiensis viri nobilis ac divitis benignitate magnopere adiutus est, ad quem plures scribit epistolas. Cuius item opibus seque suosque notarios ac librariorum sustentavit. Moriens praedixit teste Cyrillo, qui eius vitam perscripsit, coramque adfuit, se Romam quandoque transferendum. Cuius vaticinium nobis manifestatum, corpus eius in Exquiliis apud eadem divae genitricis ad praesepe collocatum cernentibus.

<sup>581</sup> 1530 Volteranno, 185r/v: Carnibus omnino ac omni opsonio cocto vino quoque abstinuisse. Scientia tanta praeditum, ut quod ipse ignoraverit nullus hominum umquam sciverit.

<sup>582</sup> VH 109-113: Reperit hic scriptor suos lectores; reperit a quibus citetur; et quo magis mireris eruditos, Platinam et Volaterranum, quos equidem vel hinc suspicor ea nunquam legisse, sed aut audisse in contionibus, aut hinc excerpta fragmenta modo vidisse.

speak and whom we might consult and imitate as much as the living can'.<sup>583</sup> Even though lives of the Popes had been written before, Platina believed that none of these showed 'proper ordering or elegance, and this is not done on purpose as they boast, claiming to flee polished style because holy things should not be written about with an elegant style, but out of their ignorance and out of their neglect of good letters'.<sup>584</sup> For Platina it was enough to cite the learning and the knowledge of the Church Fathers Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Gregory, Leo, Cyprian and Lactantius in order to refute naysayers of eloquence,<sup>585</sup> even if he did acknowledge that the need to invent new Latin terminology for Christian matters made for special challenges in the quest to find, to safeguard and to further Latin style and diction.<sup>586</sup> In his lives of the early Roman Pontiffs, Platina provided a wealth of information about the Church of Jerome's day, drew often from Jerome as a source and even criticized his accuracy, twice exclaiming surprise at Jerome's judgement that Felix II was an 'Arian bishop', which Platina thought surely false since Felix was 'very orthodox', 'had always condemned the Arians' and 'was never found by his opponents to lack anything in orthodoxy'.<sup>587</sup> In his lives of Sylvester, Felix II, Damasus, Anastasius, Innocentius and Sixtus

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<sup>583</sup> 1485 Platina, foreword: Quid si veteres illi apud quos virtus in praecio fuit celebrari maiorum suorum statuas in foro collocatas pro templis ac aliis in locis publicis volebant ad utilitatem hominum respicientes, quanti a nobis facienda est historia, quae non muta ut statuae, non vana ut picturae, veras praeclarorum virorum imagines nobis exprimit, quibuscum loqui, quos consulere et imitari, ut vivos fas est.

<sup>584</sup> 1485 Platina, foreword: Non sum tamen nescius futuros quosdam qui dicant me hoc onus frustra suscepisse, cum id antea a plerisque factum sit. Leguntur certe multi (Damasum semper excipio) qui nullum florem orationis, nullam compositionem et elegantiam sequuntur, non de industria (ut ipsi iactant) ornatu fugientes, quod eleganti stilo res sacrae scribi non debeant, sed inscitia et ignorance bonarum litterarum.

<sup>585</sup> 1485 Platina, foreword: His autem obicere Augustini, Hieronymi, Ambrosii, Gregorii, Leonis, Cypriani, Lactantii eruditione et doctrina sit satis. Qui hac in re Ciceronis auctoritate sequentes arbitrari sunt nihil esse tam incultum et horridum, quod non splenderet oratione.

<sup>586</sup> 1485 Platina, foreword: Non negaverim tamen huic generi scribendi difficultatem quandam inesse, cum nudis verbis interdum, ac minus latinis quaedam exprimenda sunt, quae in nostra theologia continentur.

<sup>587</sup> 1485 Platina, f. 103r: ...Foelix autem (quem diximus) in Liberii locum a catholicis subrogatum esse, licet id factum ab haereticis Eusebio et Hieronymus affirmant, quod certe miror, statim ubi Pontificatum iniit Constantinum magni Constantini filium haeticum et secundo rebaptizatum promulgat ab Eusebio Nicomediensi episcopo in Aquilone villa non longe a Nicomedia. Hinc autem deprehendi error potest quo ducuntur nonnulli, qui hanc haeresim magno constantino ascribunt...Hieronymus ait (quod ego certo miror) ut Romae in Liberii locum Foelicem Arrianum episcopum constitueret, quem profecto catholicum fuisse constat, ut scripsimus, et Arrianos semper damnasset. Foelix autem postremo cum nulla in re orthodoxae fidei deesset ab adversariis captus, una cum multis secum bene sentientibus interficitur, sepelliturque in basilica quam ipsae aedificavit via Aurelia secundo ab urbe Roma miliario duodecimo calendas decembris.

III, Platina included biographical information about Jerome while providing a more general description of the Church in this time. Full of gripping details, including Damasus' trial for adultery and his dedication to 'scholarly leisure' after his acquittal,<sup>588</sup> in Platina's lives we see clearly the faction and the strife that Erasmus highlighted in his *Life* when he wrote about the Church of Jerome's day, 'in which partisanship was so rife' that 'scarcely anyone eminent for his learning escaped the suspicion of heresy'.<sup>589</sup> Platina's *Vita* was a readily available text that many contemporaries used as an historical source. For example, Hartmann Schedel, in his *Liber Chronicorum*, clearly copied his life of Damasus directly from Platina.<sup>590</sup> Platina's *Vita* was also a work that, broadly speaking, fell in line with Erasmus' humanist sympathies. Erasmus cited this text in his *Life* only in order to rue that a man so learned as Platina had fallen into the trap of citing bad sources, but we know that Erasmus had read this work thoroughly, since he used it elsewhere as a source for a flattering letter to Leo X.<sup>591</sup> It seems likely to me that Erasmus used this work as a reference in order to paint his picture of the Church in Jerome's day.

Erasmus' *Life* also included pointed criticisms of some secondary sources that he cites. The first work that Erasmus criticized by name in his *Life* is Flavio Biondo's *De Roma instaurata* (*Rome Restored*), a famous work of early archaeology which Erasmus had closely

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<sup>588</sup> 1485 Platina, f. 20r.

<sup>589</sup> VH 769-770: Quandoquidem illo factiosissimo saeculo vix quisquam eximie doctus haereseos suspicione carebat.

<sup>590</sup> Compare Platina's write-up of Damasus' life with that of Schedel. They use exactly the same words. 1485 Platina, f. 20r: Paccata tandem ecclesia Damasus otio litterario delectatus vitas pontificum omnium qui ante se fuere conscripsit, easque ad Hieronymum misit. Non destitit tamen et templa et cultum divinum augere. Duas enim basilicas aedificavit, unam iuxta theatrum, alteram via ardeatina ad cathecumbas. Dedicavit et Platoniam ubi corpora Petri et Pauli aliquando iacuerant. Versibus quoque elegantibus sanctorum corpora eo loci sepulta exornavit ad memoriam posteritatis. Praetera vero basilicam quam ipse in honorem divi Laurentii non longe a theatro pompeiano condiderat maximis muneribus ornavit. See 1497 Schedel, f. 148r: Paccata tandem ecclesia Damasus otio litterario delectatus vitas pontificum omnium qui ante se fuere conscripsit, easque ad Hieronymum misit. Non destitit tamen et templa et cultum divinum augere. Duas enim basilicas aedificavit, unam iuxta theatrum, alteram via ardiatica ad cathecumbas, versibus quoque elegantibus sanctorum corporum eo loci sepulta exornavit ad memoriam posteritatis. Praetera vero basilicam quam ipse in honorem divi Laurentii non longe a theatro Pompeiano condiderat maximis muneribus ornavit...

<sup>591</sup> Bietenholz, *History and Biography*, 60-61.



read. It is clear that Biondo had a great admiration for ‘the most glorious Jerome’. In the eleventh book of his *De Roma instaurata*, in which he wrote about the region of Istria, Biondo described at remarkable length the position and the borders of the town Sdrigna, from which ‘the most glorious doctor and illustrator of the Church of God, Jerome, took his origins’.<sup>592</sup> For Biondo, it was necessary to write more than usual about the geographical situation of Sdrigna, once Stridon according to him, because, since he had met many men unsure of the true whereabouts of Jerome’s origins, he wished ‘to show the most learned men of Italy and of other regions of the Christian world’ that Jerome was born in an Italian province.<sup>593</sup> Biondo described the long local tradition of honouring Jerome at Sdrigna, where one could still visit ‘at Sdrigna or Stridon the tomb of the aforesaid Eusebius, the father of Saint Jerome: whose fame has been passed through the succession of ages and which has been decorated with an inscribed, an inscription made in lead’<sup>594</sup> – one that Erasmus mocked in his *Life*.<sup>595</sup> Biondo asserted that we could draw the location of Jerome’s birthplace from his *De viris illustribus* as well as from his commentaries on the twelve minor prophets, and he saw his efforts to prove the location of Jerome’s birthplace as a work of piety in honour of ‘the most glorious Jerome’.<sup>596</sup> Erasmus, as we have seen, criticized such zeal in his *Life*, stating that Biondo’s sources did not justify the identification of Stridon with Sdrigna.

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<sup>592</sup> We see similar passages in later editions of Biondo’s *Italia illustrata* (*Italy Illustrated*). See 1510 Biondo, f. 110v: Unde gloriosissimus ecclesiae dei doctor illustratorque Hieronymus originem duxit. See Morisi Guerra, *Vita di San Giralomo*, 99

<sup>593</sup> 1510 Biondo, f. 110v: Adhibita est nobis superiori loco describendis histriae montium oppidis et castellis solito maior diligentia quod quidem nulla alia fecimus ratione qua ut re minime nobis peritisque regionum dubiam. Sed de quo multos ambigere vidimus praestantissimos Italiae atque orbis Christiani aliarum provinciarum viros doceremus. Stridonem oppidum gloriosi Hieronymi patriam in Italia et quam nunc et quam Octavii Augusti imperatoris et multo magis Plinii atque etiam natalium ipsius Hieronymi temporibus erat situm esse ut tantum virum plane Italicum et non alienigenam fuisse constat.

<sup>594</sup> 1510 Biondo, f. 110v: Visitur vero apud Sdrignam sive Stridonem praedicti Eusebii genitoris sancti Hieronymi sepulchrum: et fama per aetatis successiones tradita et litteris lamine inscriptis plumbeae in eo ut ferunt repertae notissimum.

<sup>595</sup> VH 144-148.

<sup>596</sup> For Biondo’s treatment of Jerome’s birthplace see 1510 Biondo, ff. 110r-111r. See 1510 Biondo, f. 111r: Finita iam ad hanc alpium per milia passus quadringenta et quinquaginta ab varo ad arsiam amnem externis nationibus munimento Italiae oppositarum partem sit Italiae nostrae latitudo in recentem gloriosissimi Hieronymi doctoris commemorationem...

Instead, Erasmus suggested that such arguments were unworthy of Christians and claimed that Jerome belonged truly to those who read his works most thoroughly and seriously.<sup>597</sup> Here I shall not analyze Erasmus' terse critique nor Biondo's text. What we should understand, however, is that Erasmus was clearly familiar with many important treatments of Jerome in humanist secondary scholarly literature. We should also understand from Biondo's text that there was already in his day a widespread humanist interest in and appreciation of the 'most glorious' Jerome. Biondo died in 1463, a few years before Erasmus was born. Another man who died decades before Erasmus' birth in faraway Budapest, Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder, had also called into question the identification of Jerome's birthplace as the town of Sdrigna. Vergerio defended this conclusion in one of his orations with reasoning quite like Erasmus' in the *Life of Jerome*: 'Indeed it is neither the nearness of a place, nor the nearness of blood nor any worldly relationship, but rather the honesty of habits, the holiness of life and devotion of the mind that are pleasing to God and that put us in his grace.'<sup>598</sup> When it came to determining the true place of Jerome's birth, Erasmus was clearly engaging an already long-standing scholarly discussion.

In his *Life*, Erasmus engaged in greater detail Francesco Filelfo's use and appreciation of Jerome and his merits in his letters. Filelfo ranked among the fifteenth century's most renowned humanists, and Erasmus could have known either the fine 1503 Parisian edition of

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<sup>597</sup> VH 136-151: Natus est igitur vir eximius Hieronymus, anno ab orbe redempto trecentesimo trigesimo primo, sub Imperatore Constantino in oppido Stridonis, quod iam tum a Gothis omnia populantibus eversum fuisse, testis est ipse in Catalogo Scriptorum illustrium, olim Dalmatiae Pannoniaeque confinium. Id hodie nonnulli, quorum de numero Blondus est, idem esse volunt cum eo quod hac tempestate vulgus Sdrignam appellat, oppidulum in Histria, Italiae regione, situm inter Petram pilosam, Portulam, et Primontem, ut horum temporum utamur vocabulis. Addunt in huius rei fidem, ibidem ostendi monumentum Eusebii patris cum ephitaphio laminis insculpto, nimirum id agentes ut Hieronymum Italiae suae vindicent. Mihi studium et affectus istiusmodi parum dignus videtur gravibus viris, immo in totum Christianis. Qui in libris Hieronymianis erit diligentissime versatus, qui vitam Hieronymianam proxime exprimet, is sibi iure vidicet Hieronymum, etiam si porro ultra Britannos natus fuerit.

<sup>598</sup> See Vergerio's sixth sermon cited in McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: Humanist as Orator*, 197-198. See 198 for quote: Verum enimvero non ortus propinquitas, non coniunctio sanguinis, non ulla mundialis necessitudo, sed honestas morum, vitae sanctitas, ac mentis devotio sanctis Dei acceptabiles nos reddit et gratos. Per ea etenim sola placere ipsis possumus per quae et ipsi Deo placuerunt.

his letters or else one of many others printed in his lifetime. It is clear from reading his letters that Filelfo read Jerome as closely as he honoured him greatly. In a letter to Enea Silvio Piccolomini, then Bishop of Siena, Filelfo recommended that the cleric ‘keep before his eyes’ Church Fathers such as Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, both Gregories and, of course, ‘great Basil and Eusebius Jerome the abbots, with whose almost endless and most elegant books both Italy and Greece are rich’.<sup>599</sup> In another letter to the head of the Franciscan order, Filelfo labelled Jerome ‘most learned’ and ranked him with Augustine and with Ambrose as the foremost Church Fathers.<sup>600</sup> For all his undoubted admiration of Jerome, however, Filelfo found his bitter satire troubling. Writing both to Valla and to Poggio in 1453 in order to urge the two humanists to end their bitter strife, Filelfo asked them to put aside their scholarly mud-slinging in the satirical style:

Not only does Sallust not please me with those things that he wrote against Cicero, nor does it at all please me what Cicero wrote against Anthony, or Demosthenes against Timarchus and Philippus: but even that most holy and most learned Jerome I cannot read without annoyance when he inveighs against Rufinus, who was clearly a learned man as we see in his own writings, and since the richest testimony of Aurelius Augustine teaches us that he was also a saintly and a good man. For which reason, if you are wise, Poggio and Lorenzo, you will put an end to that great and that loathsome licence of cursing each other...<sup>601</sup>

In another 1449 letter to Aloysius Crotto, in which he commended Crotto’s collection of Jerome and Augustine’s letters, Filelfo praised Augustine’s philosophy and learning and

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<sup>599</sup> 1496 Filelfo, f. 116r/v: Quid te nunc agere oportet tanta levatum laborum mole ?...Pone tibi ante oculos pontificem nostrum Ambrosium, Aurelium Augustinum. Ioannem Chrysostomum, utrumque Gregorium, qui cum ipsi quoque essent episcopi et infinitis fere occupationibus obruti, quot tamen et quanta quamque salutifera volumina lucubrarunt? Quid enim aut magnum Basilium aut Eusebium Hieronymum abbates meminero, quorum paene infinitis elegantissimisque libris, et Italia pollet et Graecia, Christianique omnes mirifice iuvantur? Sed longior sum quam debeo, praesertim tecum pontifice prudentissimo. Vale.

<sup>600</sup> 1496 Filelfo, f. 218r/v: At dixerit quispiam: nonne id nominis divus intellexit Ambrosius? Nonne disertissimus Hieronimus? Non eruditissimus Augustinus? Non alii permulti atque sapientissimi doctores ecclesiae, qui aequae graeco ac latino eloquio floruerunt? Intellexerunt ii quidem omnes. Nec dubito, si illorum codices extarent, quos suis illi manibus scripserunt, nunquam tantus et tam crassus error in Romanam ecclesiam invasisset. Sed dum litteraturam contemnimus politioemque disciplinam, non solum in verbis, sed in rebus quoque ipsis non mediocriter erramus.

<sup>601</sup> 1496 Filelfo, f. 170r: (after praising Nicholas V)...At oratio nostra occulta esse non potest. Non modo me Salustius iis non delectat, quae scripsit in M. Tullium Ciceronem, nec item omnino quae Cicero in Antonium, aut in Timarchum Philippumque Demosthenes. Sed etiam vir sanctissimus ac disertissimus Hieronymus non sine molestia a me legitur, cum invehitur in Rufinum, quem virum doctum extitisse ex eius scriptis facile ipsi cognoscimus, sanctum vero bonumque fuisse Aurelii augustini locupletissimum testimonium docet. Quare si sapitis Poggi atque Laurenti, missam facite tantam istam tamque abominabilem maledicendi licentiam.

Jerome's undoubted elegance, claiming that in their lives, 'Jerome was abrasive, whereas Augustine was mild'.<sup>602</sup> After weighing together all the two saints' different merits, accomplishments and faults, according to Filelfo, 'if you could have made one man of these two men, nature could make nothing more perfect'.<sup>603</sup> To Filelfo's mild criticism of Jerome in this letter Erasmus reacted with surprising forcefulness in his *Life*:

Further, there are those to whom the sharpness of [Jerome's] language gives offence because in his writings his anger sometimes seems to flare up with an intensity exceeding the counsels of Christian forbearance, and in his biting attack on many he clearly seems to recall something of the spirit of Old Comedy. This opinion Augustine once shared and in our time Francesco Filelfo, heaven forgive me, a scholar of some stature but sometimes betraying too high an opinion of himself.<sup>604</sup>

Erasmus then excused the sharpness of Jerome's pen:

But these critics in my opinion do not give enough attention to the circumstances of the particular case – native land, natural disposition, self-reliance, the unscrupulousness of rivals, an intolerable kind of contumely – or finally to that well-known remark in Terence: 'If you were in my place your opinion would be different'.<sup>605</sup>

He continued to remark that Jerome was in the right to react violently to accusations of heresy and interpreted Jerome's satire against Rufinus in the kindest possible light. Faced with overwhelming evidence, many of Jerome's admirers, such as Filelfo, had to admit that

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<sup>602</sup> See Morisi Guerra, *Vita di San Girolamo*, 151-152. This is an opinion that Wiesen shared. See Wiesen, *Saint Jerome as a Satirist*, 239: The dispute highlights the contrast between the two men: Augustine, gentle and reasonable, in search of true knowledge, reluctant to indulge in recrimination; Jerome, irascible, proud, biting, refusing to believe that his own views do not represent absolute truth.

<sup>603</sup> 1496 Filelfo, f. 99v: Hieronymi quas petieras Augustinique epistolas, ad te dedi commodato. Quare ubi eas pro tua voluntate lecitaveris, cura ad me redeant. Quod autem quaeris ad de utruque sentiam, et quo ad doctrinam et quo ad eloquentiam, breviter accipe. Omnium primum de rebus divinis non est meum iudicare, sed ecclesiasticae dignitatis auctoritatisque. Caeterum puto utrumque vero pulcherrimeque divinarum rerum omnium scientiam tenuisse. Sed quo ad reliquas omnis partes philosophiae Augustinus visus est longe tum acutior et peritior, tum etiam subtilior. Dialecticus Augustinus fuit egregius et idem physicus atque mathematicus. Huic Hieronymus plurimum praestitit dicendi elegantia potius quam doctrina, id quod ex utriusque oratione licet intueri. Graecam litteraturam Hieronymus perpulchre calluit, Augustinus minus perfecte. Ille hebraicae quoque habetur eruditus et Augustinus illi linguae ignarus omnino. Vita horridus Hieronimus, Augustinus autem mitis. Quod si ex iis duobus unum effici potuisset, nihil natura absolutius aedidisset.

<sup>604</sup> VH 1096-1102: Ad haec sunt quos nonnihil offendit sermonis acerbitas, quod in scriptis suis acrius nonnunquam videatur incandescere quam pro Christiana mansuetudine, planeque veteris comoediae quiddam referre, multos mordicus arripiens. In hac sententia fuit olim Augustinus, et nostra memoria, si superis placet, Franciscus Philelphus, vir ille quidem eruditus, sed nonnunquam plus satis φίλαυτος.

<sup>605</sup> VH 1102-1105: At hi mihi parum expendere videntur negotii circumstantias, patriam, ingenium, sui fiduciam, aemulorum improbitatem, contumeliae genus nulli ferendum; postremo nec illud Terentianum: 'Tu si hic, aliter sentias'.

the saint sometimes went too far in his satirical letters and writings. Nevertheless, in his *Life of Jerome*, Erasmus undertook a sustained defence of Jerome's satire, which, according to him, was usually in answer to accusations of heresy, in which case 'tolerance is a wrong, not a virtue'.<sup>606</sup> What is more, he would not concede anything to Rufinus as Filelfo plainly did above, noting: 'there are those who allow some merit to Rufinus. I, however, not only find his learning inadequate, but I scent a character, I think, that is venomous and sly and by no means open'.<sup>607</sup> Humanist scholars had been interpreting Jerome's satirical writings for years before Erasmus' birth. In his *Life of Jerome*, Erasmus was writing in answer to such interpretations, reacting against negative interpretations of Jerome's satire and offering a spirited defence of Jerome's hard words for his opponents, and especially for Rufinus.

Although defending Jerome's satire was an important part of Erasmus' apology in his *Life*, and something which he continued in later writings,<sup>608</sup> Erasmus devoted far more text and vigour to refuting criticisms of Jerome's learning found in humanist secondary literature. One renowned humanist to whom Erasmus responded most forcefully was Filippo Beroaldo the Elder, who died in 1505, and to whose interpretations of Jerome Erasmus devoted two charged paragraphs in his *Life*. In the first of these, Erasmus cited Beroaldo's commentaries on the tenth chapter of Suetonius' *Life of Julius Caesar*.<sup>609</sup> In his commentary on the verbs *emere* and *comparare*, Beroaldo respectfully expressed his surprise that Jerome had mocked Rufinus for his use of the word *comparare* to mean 'to buy', remarking, after citing Cato's

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<sup>606</sup> VH 866-871: Primum ipsa scripta clamitant Hieronymo vehemens et ardens fuisse ingenium, humanissimum quidem, sed liberum; hoc impatientius contumeliae, quod nulli malum moliretur. Deinde haereseos ea est insimulatio, in qua tolerantem esse impietas sit, non virtus. Accedebant ad haec tot faces, quae vel lenissimum ingenium valeant irritare.

<sup>607</sup> VH 871-873: Sunt qui Ruffino nonnihil tribuant. Mihi nec eruditio satisfacit, et mores olfacere videor virulentos ac vafros, minimeque liberales.

<sup>608</sup> See Erasmus' long letter to Martin Dorp in Allen 337. Erasmus defended several occasions Jerome's biting satire. See Allen 337, 51-58; 284-289.

<sup>609</sup> See 1506 Beroaldo. The pages are not marked in this edition, but see Beroaldo's commentaries on Suetonius' *Life of Julius Caesar* 10, 2. This passage itself reads: Adiecit insuper Caesar etiam gladiatorium munus, sed aliquanto paucioribus quam destinaverat paribus; nam cum multiplici undique familia comparata inimicos exterruisset, cautum est de numero gladiatorum, quo ne maiorem cuiquam habere Romae liceret.

*De re rustica* (*On Farming*) for his authority, that ‘in this Rufinus does not seem to have done wrong but rather to have followed the authority of the earliest authors, which we see to be right, and on whose authority we rely as though on an anchor’.<sup>610</sup> To this respectful criticism Erasmus replied vehemently in his *Life*:

But a much greater degree of insolence marks Filippo Beroaldo’s censure of Jerome for reproving Rufinus because he used the word *comparo* instead of *emo*. ‘Hence it is’, he says, ‘that I am surprised that Jerome reviled Rufinus with excessive vehemence, not to say hostility’. Rather it is you, Beroaldo, who display excessive insolence, not to say ineptitude, in assailing a man far your superior in morality and in learning.<sup>611</sup>

After a drawn-out explanation of why Jerome was right to condemn Rufinus in this case,<sup>612</sup> Erasmus admitted that we might need to forgive Beroaldo for youthful impetuosity since he had written his commentaries on Suetonius at a young age.<sup>613</sup> In the next paragraph, however, Erasmus attacked Beroaldo’s commentaries in his edition of Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*, in which Beroaldo argued that Jerome had incorrectly used the word *pexus*, or ‘woolly’.<sup>614</sup> Erasmus mocked Beroaldo’s careful arguments as ‘poppycock’.<sup>615</sup> He made it most clear that he could never agree with Beroaldo’s interpretation of the word *pexus* and spent an entire paragraph

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<sup>610</sup> 1506 Beroaldo (commentaries to chapter 10 of Suetonius’ *Life of Julius Caesar*): Comparata, parata, coempta et comparare interdum significat emere sicut vulgo dicitur. Cato in libro *De re rustica* perdidit cum comparare cogitabis sic in animo habeto. Item reliqua quae comparanda sint, si quid desit, in animum uti comparentur, quae supersint veneant. Unde miror Hieronymus nimis ardentem, ne dicam inimiciter carpsisse Ruffinum, quod comparatum codicem pro empto dixerit, cum Ruffinus in hoc non tam peccasse videatur quam sequutus auctoritate priscorum, quae nobis pro ratione est, et ad eam tanquam ad anchoram confugimus.

<sup>611</sup> VH 1479-1484: Verum non paulo insolentius taxat Hieronymum Philippus Beroaldus, qui Ruffinum reprehenderit, quod comparandi verbo abusus sit pro emere. ‘Unde miror’, inquit, ‘Hieronymum nimis ardentem, ne dicam inimiciter carpsisse Ruffinum.’ Immo tu nimis ardentem, ne dicam ineptiter, Beroalde, virum tanto te et meliorem et eruditorem flagellas.

<sup>612</sup> VH 1484-1499.

<sup>613</sup> VH 1499-1501: Sed hoc fortasse condonari poterat aetatis calori, quod commentarios in Suetonium iuvenis, opinor, scripserit.

<sup>614</sup> See 1512 Beroaldo, f. 25v: Et Hieronymus adversus Iovinianum tunc pexa tunica et nigra subucula vestiebaris, sordidatus et pallidus, sed ad cum bona pace sanctissimi scriptoris dictum sit. Quia ora emulari volens pexam tunicam pro lacera et sordida accepit, quod longe secus est...Videri post hallucinatus esse divus Hieronymus ut crederet pexam tunicam accipi pro lacerata et vili ex illo Terentiano, adeo depexum dabo, ut dum vivat memineret semper mei...See *Contra Iovinianum* 2, 21 (PL 23, 329) and Morisi Guerra, *Vita di San Girolamo*, 160.

<sup>615</sup> VH 1502-1507: At idem in his commentariis quos senex edidit in Asinum Apuleii, rursus caedit Hieronymum quod pexam vestem posuerit pro detrita vilique, cum Horatius sit usus pro nova et eleganti. Ne nimium operae ponam in huiusmodi nugis, primum Hieronymus hoc loco non interpretatur quid senserit Horatius, ne alludens quidem apertius ad illius verba.

trying to show that Beroaldo was wrong in this case.<sup>616</sup> The forcefulness of Erasmus' answer to Beroaldo is surprising since Beroaldo clearly admired Jerome, having read and drawn widely from his writings in order to put together his skilful commentaries to Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, of which you can hardly turn three pages without seeing Jerome cited as an historical source or as an authority. Beroaldo's knowledge of and respect for Jerome's works was unmistakable, but Erasmus criticized Beroaldo for the few moments when he suggested that Jerome might have been mistaken. In addition to criticizing Beroaldo, Erasmus upbraided no less forcefully Pietro Crinito<sup>617</sup> and Giovanni Battista Pio<sup>618</sup> for daring to question the perfection of Jerome's scholarship. Crinito's measured critique of Jerome in his *De honesta disciplina* (*On Honourable Learning*), in which he expressed unmistakable admiration for the great doctor and even made excuses for some possible slips in Jerome's style,<sup>619</sup> spurred Erasmus to answer the long-dead Crinito with words no less polemical than his answer to Beroaldo's commentaries.<sup>620</sup> Erasmus' critique of Pio's treatment of Jerome in the *Annotamenta* was not fair. Pio actually excused Jerome for a mistaken translation of a Hebrew word in the Psalms and blamed it instead on the mistakes of scribes, 'those cowed little brothers who with no learning in good letters' had 'blinded their owl eyes in the sun'

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<sup>616</sup> VH 1507-1525.

<sup>617</sup> VH 1332-1344.

<sup>618</sup> VH 1526-1533.

<sup>619</sup> See 1508 Crinito, f. 3v: Dictum celebre est Theodori Gazae de divo Hieronymo eiusque eruditione affectum fuisse iniuria Hieronymum a Ruffino, quod eum pro Ciceroniano accuset, in quo paulo audacius ironia est usus. Nam quid inquit opus, ut in re falsa in ius appellaretur, litemque illi ad tribunal Christi de nimia eloquentia contestaretur, sed hoc totum de Gazae ingenio et acumine prope nata exponemus. Erant forte cum Bessarione Niceno viro in philosophia excellenti Theodorus Gaza et Plethon bizantius qui congnomento γεμισθος appellatur, tres eo tempore (ut constant) viri doctrina et ingenio nobiles, quaesitum est igitur de divo Hieronymi quantum in romana eloquentia praestiterit. Ex quo Bessarion, facundia inquit maxima fuit apud latinos Hieronymus, quando et affectatae nimis eloquentiae pro Ciceroniano et habitus sit et accusatus. In quo Theodorus dicitur risum movisse, ut qui foret in romana etiam eloquentia censor acerrimus. Et simul iniuria haec inquit, o Bessarion insignis in Hieronymum facta est a Ruffino, plagasque illas nullo suo merito tulit. Quo dicto Bessarion et Gemistus magis riferunt, cognito Theodori ingenio et attica urbanitate. Neque prorsus negaverim quaedam esse in Hieronymo quae non usque quaque romanam in dicendo puritatem atque elegantiam probant. Quod equidem vitium (si id vitium est) non homini, sed tempori et professioni tribuedum existimo. Nam inter Christianos homines (ut idem inquit Hieronymus) non eloquentiae, sed vitae accusantur vitia...

<sup>620</sup> VH 1321-1344.

and corrupted the text.<sup>621</sup> As Erasmus did in his *Life* and later in his introductory letter to Warham for the 1524-1526 Froben edition of Jerome's works,<sup>622</sup> Pio also noted that Jerome, whom he called the 'flashing lightning-bolt of Christian elegance', was at his best when responding to his adversaries' attacks, and he praised Jerome's *Adversus Iovinianum* for its especial elegance and force.<sup>623</sup>

Although Erasmus fierily attacked the above scholars' measured criticisms of Jerome, he himself often criticized Jerome's scholarship in his commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*<sup>624</sup> as well as in his *Annotationes* to the 1516 Froben New Testament.<sup>625</sup> The index of the 1519 Froben edition of the *Annotationes* listed outright criticisms of Jerome's scholarship, pointing to places where 'Jerome disagrees with himself', where 'Jerome is not consistent', where 'Jerome twists not a little the words of Scripture' and where 'Jerome's memory slips'.<sup>626</sup> In many examples in the *Annotationes*, Erasmus criticized Jerome's Biblical scholarship much as the above humanist scholars criticized Jerome's Latinity. In the *Life*, however, Erasmus

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<sup>621</sup> See 1505 Pio, *Annotamenta*, chapter 56: Quid igitur? Hieronymo ne trilingui, religionis antistiti, literarum thesauro, hebraicae linguae consultissimo, errorem hunc adscribemus? Minime gentium. Potius fraterculis istis bardocucullatis qui expertes bonarum litterarum non intelligentes illam dictionem acus inspersi pulvere inscitiae noctuinos oculos in sole caligantes pulverem substituerunt.

<sup>622</sup> See this introductory letter in Allen 1451, 90-96: Porro quemadmodum M. Tullius nusquam est admirabilior in dicendo quam vbi dolor ceu calcar addit eloquentiae viribus, ita divus Hieronymus, cum nusquam non sit eruditus, nusquam non eloquens, tamen haud alibi dicit melius quam vbi maledicit haereticis aut calumniatoribus: si tamen hoc est maledicere, quod verum est acriter defendere.

<sup>623</sup> 1505 Pio, chapter 55: Hieronymum illum inquam Hieronymum eloquentiae theologicae fulmen coruscum quoties lectito videor non verba legere, sed audire tonitrua, praesertim quando comminus clypeum hostis impellit, et instantis adversarii gladium perpellit. Sed di deaeque quanto nitore peculiariter effulget et lucidissime coruscat in eo libro qui est contra Iovinianum, qui et si diurna nocturnaue manu subinde excutiat a corruptela tamen non prorsus est immunis.

<sup>624</sup> See Appendix IX for the scholion *Solum pietatis genus* to *Quanto studio et amore* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 3r: Haud scio an pro solum, legendum sit solidum. Quamquam solum, probe quadrat, si adverbium sit non nomen, ut intelligas, pietatis genus esse, crudelem fuisse, sed in hac duntaxat causa, hoc est cum parentes obstant, quo minus adhaereant Christo. Etiam si mihi videtur, et hoc non nihil ad suum negotium torquere Hieronymus. Erasmus made similar criticisms in his *scholia* to *In veteri via* and *Nihil Christiano felicius*, from which sources he also drew in his *Life*.

<sup>625</sup> See Erasmus' commentaries on Paul's letter to Titus, chapter 2, in 1516 *New Testament*, pages 581-582.

<sup>626</sup> See the index to the 1519 Froben *New Testament*, page 560, where we see entries: Hieronymus memoria lapsus; Hieronymus Origenis interpres quaedam de suo admisit; Hieronymus detorquens nonnihil verba scripturae; Hieronymus a seipso dissentiens; Hieronymus sibi non constans; Hieronymus sibi alicubi parum constans.



wrote off high-handedly any criticism of Jerome, some of which came from humanist scholars much more renowned than he was in 1516.<sup>627</sup> Even Lorenzo Valla, among Erasmus' favourite contemporary writers,<sup>628</sup> did not escape Erasmus' criticism when it came to Jerome.<sup>629</sup> In the fifth book of his *Elegantiae linguae latinae* (*Elegances of the Latin Language*), Valla, another great admirer of Jerome, questioned the saint's confusion of the past participles of the Latin verbs *sto* and *sisto*.<sup>630</sup> In his *Life*, Erasmus claimed that 'the mediocre have no qualms about calumniating this man, whom not even the greatest can match'.<sup>631</sup> Among these 'mediocre' Erasmus clearly ranked one of his favourite writers, Valla! Whereas Erasmus criticized Jerome from time to time in other works, in the *Life* he allowed for no criticism whatsoever of the Church Father.

In his *Life of Jerome* Erasmus reacted, sometimes with surprising vigour, to several important examples of contemporary secondary literature, drawing extensively from this literature in order to criticize its creators. But Erasmus also agreed with many things found in such secondary sources and he used them often, such as when he tried to debunk the use of Jerome's *Somnium* as a justification for not studying Classical letters and when he asserted

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<sup>627</sup> See Erasmus' commentaries on Matthew 26 in 1516 Froben *New Testament*, page 288: Percutiam pastorem). Vaticinium est apud Zachariam prophetam cap. 13. Convenit autem aeditio Septuaginta cum Hebraica veritate. Sed evangelista quod illic dictum est sub persona prophetae rogantis, ut deus percutiat pastorem, accommodavit ad personam ipsius Dei. Id enim prodidit Hieronymus libro de optimo genere interpretandi ad Pammachium, atque eadem fere repetit enarrans hunc prophetae locum. Atqui hac sane in re, aut ego prorsus hallucinor, aut lapsus est Hieronymus, quem ut fateor virum fuisse summa doctrina, pari eloquentia, incomparabili sanctimonia, ita hominem fuisse non possum diffiteri.

<sup>628</sup> See Francesco Rico, *La rêve de l'humanisme* (Paris: Belles lettres, 2002), 140.

<sup>629</sup> Erasmus also criticized Valla's Biblical scholarship at many moments in his *Annotationes*. See the index to the 1519 edition and specifically the listing, *Valla taxatus*, on page 575.

<sup>630</sup> See 1505 Valla, f. 51r: Quare nescio cur Hieronymus adversus Iovinianum dixerit, offendet Iovem statorem, qui libenter sederet, quasi Iuppiter stator a stando dicatur, non a sistendo.

<sup>631</sup> VH 1462-1478: Et tamen hunc virum, quem ne summi quidem queant adsequi, non verentur calumniari et mediocres. Notatur a Laurentio quod in libris adversus Iovinianum, sic Iovis Statoris fecerit mentionem, velut a stando dictus sit, et non potius a sistendo. Quasi vero illic hoc agat Hieronymus, unde dictus sit Iuppiter Stator, ac non magis ridendi Ioviniani quaesiverit ansam...Et tamen sive a sistendo deducitur stator, sive a stando, nihil est in quo reprehendas Hieronymum. Quid enim est aliud sistere, quam facere ut stet aliquid? Quod enim Graecis unica vox declarat ἱστάναι, id Latini duabus explicant, sed inter se cognatis. Proinde cum Iuppiter sit Stator, hunc offendere videtur qui sedere gaudeat. Atque haec qualiscumque vocum ac rerum affinitas erat captandi risum.

that Jerome was not only a theologian, but that his learning and his scholarly methods were all but necessary for good theology. In all these arguments Erasmus relied on and developed ideas that we find in the foreword to Valla's fourth book of *Elegantiae* and in Poliziano's *Miscellanea* (*Miscellanies*). In his *Life*, Erasmus cited the treatments of those 'most eloquent men', Valla and Poliziano, as well as his own *Antibarbarorum libri* (*Books Against the Barbarians*), as a reference for readers wanting information about the *Somnium* and more detailed explanations about why it was misleading and wrong-headed to try to use it in order to discourage the study of Classical letters or to assert that Jerome had abandoned their study after the *Somnium*.<sup>632</sup> After these citations Erasmus re-stated and developed several ideas that we find in the works of Valla and of Poliziano. When it came to the *Somnium*, Poliziano was clearly not alone in his wish to write off its importance. In his letters, one of Poliziano's correspondents, Bartolomeo Scala, recounted a well-known meeting of humanists, including Cardinal Bessarion, in which Theodore Gaza mocked the *Somnium* and said that Jerome had been 'most undeservedly punished' since his Latin was not, after all, Ciceronian enough.<sup>633</sup> This was a well-known story that we have already seen re-told in Crinito's work, *De honesta disciplina*.<sup>634</sup> Gaza's joke at Jerome's expense offended Erasmus, and in his commentaries

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<sup>632</sup> VH 1126-1135: *Iam vero piget etiam meminisse, quod audimus quotidie quosdam impie religiosos et inscite doctos nobis ad aurem obgannire, id in Hieronymo calumniantes quod in eo pulcherrimum est, nimirum doctrinam, ut ipsi vocant, immodicam, et plusculum eloquentiae quam theologum deceat. Neque quicquam omnino norunt de Hieronymo, nisi quod Ciceronianus dictus vapularit. Verum huius rei, quoniam ab eruditissimis abunde responsum est, Laurentio Valla et Angelo Politiano, et nos olim adolescentuli minores annis viginti lusimus in istorum stultitiam Dialogis quos Antibarbaros inscripsimus, unum illud hoc adiiciam loco.*

<sup>633</sup> See 1498 Poliziano, f. 44v: *Convenerant in coronae modum quidam docti videlicet, et literati homines, ac cum de studiis (ut fere fit) sermo incidisset, de divo Hieronymo frequentior oratio fuit, ut ne verbera quidem ante aeterni ludicis tribunal, quod Ciceronianus, non autem Christianus esset tacerentur. Theodorus Gaza, qui et ipse forte aderat, vir profecto quantum possum ego iudicare de literis, praeclara eloquentia, ridens facete admodum questus dicitur iniuriam viro sanctissimo immeritissime illatam. Ita cum risu soluta contio est. Sed quorsum fabella inquires me Politian, delitiae urbis huius? Quantum et mihi quoque nunc Theodoro aliquo opus est, qui eximat de Ciceronianorum grege. Nam quis est tandem, qui me usquam huiusmodi notaverit? Qui ne inter mediocriter quidem eruditos connumerari iure queam.*

<sup>634</sup> See 1508 Crinito, f. 3v or note 619 above for text.

for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* he took Gaza to task for his learned *bons mots*.<sup>635</sup> However Renaissance scholars chose to interpret and to use the *Somnium*, it is clear that they often discussed it in their scholarly writings. Poliziano's *Miscellanea* (*Miscellanies*), first published in Florence in 1489, was an important work of contemporary scholarship at which we shall be looking more in this thesis' second part. In the first chapter of the first part of the *Miscellanea*, in which he undertook to defend Cicero against various critics, Poliziano highlighted the importance of Cicero's works, including his *Hortensius*, to Augustine. He then criticized those who 'bring up the dream of the sick Jerome being beaten in front of a tribunal, never thinking that Jerome himself, when he again took up reading Cicero and was called a perjurer by Rufinus, complained most bitterly that he was being accused on account of a dream'.<sup>636</sup> Valla's foreword to the fourth book of *Elegantiae* offered the same defence of Jerome's legacy, noting that Jerome had 'mocked' Rufinus' criticism and openly confessed to reading pagan works in many places, including his letter to the Roman orator Sebesium beginning *Sebesium nostrum*.<sup>637</sup> Erasmus brought up exactly this idea and this example in his *Life* in order to argue against those who tried to use the *Somnium* as a condemnation of

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<sup>635</sup> Erasmus also recounted this story in VH 1277-1320. For Erasmus' negative reaction to this story see his *antidotus* to Jerome's letter *Quanto studio et amore* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 5r. The text is also included in the index.

<sup>636</sup> 1498 Poliziano (*Miscellanea*, *Centuria prima*, chapter 1), f. 167v: [after recounting Augustine's great accomplishments in philosophy]...cuncta haec esse Ciceronis munus fatetur, unique prorsus illius libro, qui vocaretur Hortensius, omnem suae salutis occasionem retulit acceptam. Non enim ad acuendam linguam liber inquit ille offerebatur, nec locutionem mihi, sed quod loquebatur persuaserat. Quod isti utinam legissent, qui somnium aegroti nobis Hieronymi vapulantis ad tribunal obiectant, nec illud saltem cogitantes, illum ipsum Hieronymum, cum post repetitam dein statim Ciceronis lectionem, periurus a Rufino argueretur, etiam gravissime conqueri, quod sibi ab illo suamet somnia obicerentur.

<sup>637</sup> See Valla's foreword to the fourth book of the *Elegantiae* in *Prosatori latini*, 613-623. Above I have cited *Elegantiae*, foreword IV, 618: Quid? Quod ne dissimulabat quidem, nam obiciente sibi hoc somnium Rufino, hominem deridet planeque fatetur se lectitare opera gentilium, et lectitare debere, idque cum in aliis multis locis, quamquam etiam sine confessione palam est, tum vero epistola illa ad magnum oratorum [*Sebesium nostrum*]. In *Sebesium nostrum* Jerome defended his use of words from the pagan Classics, but he did not state that he continued to read them after the *Somnium*. See Jerome, Letter 70, 2.

Classical letters and who claimed that Jerome foreswore them and Cicero forever after the *Somnium*.<sup>638</sup> As usual, Erasmus and his humanist forebears did not identify these critics.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that although Erasmus and Valla often condemned opponents to humanist *bonae litterae* who misinterpreted the *Somnium*, it is not at all easy to find a contemporary opponent of humanism who actually used the *Somnium* in order to criticize the study of the pagan Classics. In one of the most intelligent and comprehensive contemporary works against the use of pagan Classical literature, Giovanni Dominici's *Lucula Noctis* (*Light of the Night*) written in 1405,<sup>639</sup> Dominici showed an impressive knowledge of Jerome's letters and commentaries and cited from them time and again in order to bolster his case against pagan Classical letters.<sup>640</sup> But Dominici hardly mentioned the *Somnium* in this lengthy work, and much less did he use it as a foundation for his argument against pagan learning.<sup>641</sup> In his description of contemporary religious orders inspired by Jerome, Rice brings up many paintings of the *Somnium* and highlights Hieronymite orders' pursuit of a '*sancta rusticitas*, an unlettered holiness', at the expense or at the exclusion of pagan 'secular' letters.<sup>642</sup> Nonetheless, it is hard not to suspect that unnamed opponents' misuse of the *Somnium* which Erasmus and Valla decried was more a figment of their own

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<sup>638</sup> VH 1138-1144: At idem Ruffino respondens satis ridet hominis curiositatem, cui non satis esset observare quid vigilans diceret aut ageret, verum etiam quid dormiens somniaret. Et adeo fatetur fuisse somnium, ut illud conferat cum prodigiosis illis noctium ludibriis quibus aliquoties sibi videretur alatus volare cum Daedalo per maria; nonnunquam comatulus esse, cum esset calvaster interdum sumpta toga, causam dicere pro rostris.

<sup>639</sup> Edmund Hunt prepared a critical text of this work back in 1940. See *Lucula Noctis*, ed. Edmund Hunt (Notre Dame, Indiana: Publications in Mediaeval Studies, 1940).

<sup>640</sup> He cited the passage from *Audi filia* in which Jerome called Classical learning the 'cup of demons' (Jerome, Letter 22, 29).

<sup>641</sup> To my knowledge, Dominici's only mention of the dream is found in Chapter 34. See *Lucula Noctis*, 273: Hac ratione precise nostri quidam Catholicorum probati, disputaturi verbo vel scripto adversus scismaticorum errores, illorum dicta legebant et quicquid spectabant ad ruinam eorum, et cessante causa cessabat effectus. Propter hoc vapulat Ieronimus, quand ad voluptatem Ciceronem et alios assumebat sed non ubi contra Iovinianum et plures scribens, dictis illorum libros suos – non dico ornabat sicut sidera celos – sed replebat velut tyriacam salubrem in se ipsis nocivis.

<sup>642</sup> See Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 73-75.

rhetoric than an accurate description of contemporary opposition to humanism.<sup>643</sup> I have yet to find one example in which a Mediaeval or Renaissance scholar based his arguments against pagan Classical learning on the example of the *Somnium*. We have little trouble, however, finding examples of contemporary and earlier Christian scholars reading plenty of Cicero and explaining away the *Somnium*. In fifteenth-century Florence, Archbishop Antonino – who elsewhere condemned Dante for putting pagan writers in Limbo whereas Jerome and Augustine put these same writers in hell<sup>644</sup> – made it clear that Jerome’s *Somnium* was only meant to condemn the ‘excessive’ study of the Classics.<sup>645</sup> Peter Abelard, clearly an avid reader of Jerome, shared Valla’s and Erasmus’ interpretation that Jerome was punished in the *Somnium* because he read pagan letters with too much enthusiasm and at the expense of sacred Scripture.<sup>646</sup> Abelard’s great debt to Cicero is obvious in his own writings,

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<sup>643</sup> See McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome*, 131: Already in 1315, the Dominican Giovannino da Mantova adduced Jerome’s remark that ‘the verses of poets are the food of demons’ to chide Albertino Mussato of Padua for his dedication to writing poetry. From Petrarch on, Jerome’s dream and his condemnation as a Ciceronian haunted the humanists.

<sup>644</sup> In his history of the world, Antonino Pierozzi (1389 – 1459), archbishop of Florence and later canonized by Erasmus’ friend Pope Adrian VI (1459-1522-1523) in 1523, upbraided Dante for putting pagans in Limbo using the authority of Jerome and of Augustine. See Pierozzi cited in Claudio Mésoniat, *Poetica Theologica* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1984), 83: Et in huiusmodi loco [sc. inferni] summi cruciatus sancti antiqui doctores, Hieronymus, Augustinus et alii, asserunt esse illos saeculi sapientes propter errorum elationem et infidelitatem, quos Dantes ponit in campis Elisiis...Nec sufficienter defendent eum qui dicunt istud non sentisse, sed ut poetam finxisse secundum opinionem aliquorum. Quia cum liber ille sit in vulgari compositus et a vulgaribus frequentata lectio eius et idiotis propter dulcedinem rythmorum et verborum elegantiam, nec sciant discernere inter fictionem et veritatem rei, de facili possunt credere esse talem statum in alia vita quem improbat fides Ecclesiae.

<sup>645</sup> Leuker, ‘Eine kritische’, 114, see footnote 52.

<sup>646</sup> See Abelard’s treatment of the dream in PL 178, 1044 A-1044 C: (*Expositio in Hexaemeron* 2, 2) At fortasse, inquires, non solum poetarum, verum etiam liberalium artium lectiones Christianis interdicendas, cum beatus Hieronymus in epistola ad Eustochium se graviter correctum ac verberatum a Domino pro lectione, philosophorum librorum, adseverat. At iam profecto nec grammaticam a Christiano legi convenit, sine documentis cuius nec divina potest intelligi pagina, nec scriptura aliqua. Sic nec rhetoricam, quae omnis eloquentiae tradit ornamenta, quibus maxime sacra Scriptura est referta, nec eius decor nisi his diligenter assignatis elucere poterit. Quare igitur, inquires, propter Ciceronis libros praedictus doctor tam graviter flagellatus et correctus est, ut sub ostentatione sacramenti cogeretur omnino saecularium librorum lectioni abrenuntiare? Profecto quia non pro utilitate aliqua, sed pro oblectatione eloquentiae illius intendebat, neglecto sacrae Scripturae studio, cuius quidem, ut ipse ait, incultus ei sermo horrebat. Ego autem nullius artis lectionem cuicumque religioso interdicendam arbitror, nisi forte per hoc maior eius aliqua utilitas praepediatur, sicut in caeteris litteris faciendum scimus, ut videlicet minora pro maioribus aut intermittantur, vel penitus omittantur.

and in this he was typical of many Mediaeval churchmen and lawyers.<sup>647</sup> How rightly to use the pagan Classics was a controversy as much for Mediaeval scholars as it was for Renaissance and for humanist scholars, if not more so.<sup>648</sup> It is only natural that, given this debate and the importance of the Church Fathers to Mediaeval scholars and reformers,<sup>649</sup> Jerome served as a source and a model for varied positions in the lively Christian debate about the proper role of the pagan Classics in Christian education – a debate already underway before Jerome’s day.

We see another testimony of the scholarly context that Erasmus shared with his humanist peers in Poliziano’s foreword to his first book of *Miscellanea*, dedicated to Lorenzo il Magnifico. Poliziano condemned those opposed to Classical letters by citing the example of the Church Fathers. He claimed that these same Church Fathers used Classical learning as ‘spoils of the Egyptians’ in the service of the Church. Poliziano praised by name Basil, Chrysostom and Gregory among the Greeks and Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome among the Latins.<sup>650</sup> The use of passages from the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy in order to justify the study of pagan Classical learning for glory of the Christian Church goes back, at least, to Jerome, to Augustine and to Origen.<sup>651</sup> In his letter *Sebesium nostrum*,

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<sup>647</sup> Cox and Ward, eds. *Rhetoric of Cicero*, 3-75.

<sup>648</sup> Trinkaus, ‘Italian Humanism and Scholastic Theology’, 328. See Charles Trinkaus, ‘*Antiquitas versus Modernitas*: An Italian Humanist Polemic and its Resonance’, in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987): 21.

<sup>649</sup> See Pierre Lardet, ‘La figure de Jérôme chez Lorenzo Valla’, in *Tradizioni patristiche nell’umanesimo*, ed. Mariarosa Cortesi and Claudio Leonardi (Firenze: SISMEL, 2000), 213-216.

<sup>650</sup> See 1498 Poliziano, ff. 157r-160v: Sed et censores item pulpitarii (nec autem de doctis, bonisque nunc agimus) solent plerunque fodicare nos, et studiis obstrepere istis. Etenim pleni ieiunitatis literas humanioris, apud insciam plebeculam, pene dixerim solemniter, buccis concrepantibus infamant, et crassa rusticitate feroculi, quam solam (quod et Hieronymus ait) pro sanctitate habent, sic in eas, et earum studiosos, ampullosis proclamationibus, infrendentes, inspumantesque desaeviunt, ut facile se declarent etiam graecos illos improbare, et paene odisse, vere sanctas animas, Basilium, Chrysostomum, Gregorios, etiam latinos, Cyprianum, Ambrosium, Augustinum, Hieronymumque ipsum, et alios id genus nostrae religionis antistites, gentium linguarumque omnium disciplinis, velut opibus aegyptiorum suffarci natos.

<sup>651</sup> Exodus 3, 22: Sed postulabit mulier a vicina sua et ab hospita vasa argentea et aurea ac vestes ponetisque eas super filios et filias vestras et spoliabitis Aegyptum. Exodus 12, 35-36: Feceruntque filii Israhel sicut praeceperat Moses et petierunt ab Aegyptiis vasa argentea et aurea vestemque plurimam. Dedit autem Dominus gratiam populo coram Aegyptiis ut commodarent eis et spoliaverunt Aegyptios.

Jerome used the image of a ‘captive handmaiden’ from Deuteronomy to represent Classical letters and their use for Christian ends.<sup>652</sup> Augustine developed this theme at length in his *De doctrina Christiana* (*On Christian Doctrine*) and in his commentaries on the Psalms.<sup>653</sup> Even if we do not find the exact words ‘to spoil the Egyptians’ in Valla’s foreword to the fourth book of the *Elegantiae*, we clearly see this idea when he compared eloquence with ‘the Ark of the Covenant’ and ‘Solomon’s Temple’ and made known his wish to use eloquence ‘in order to adorn the house of God’.<sup>654</sup> Valla likewise praised the studied speech and writing of many Latin and Greek Church Fathers, including Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Lactantius, Basil, Gregory, Chrysostom, ‘and many others who in all ages dressed themselves in those precious gems of divine speech and in the silver and the gold of eloquence, and never neglected one of these branches of learning for the sake of the other’.<sup>655</sup> Such humanist laundry-lists of praiseworthy Church Fathers abounded in Erasmus’ works, in which we see time and again the idea of ‘spoiling the Egyptians’ and the words themselves.<sup>656</sup> We also see these ideas and words Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome*, in which he praised Jerome for his skill at ‘plundering whatever he could from the Egyptians in order to enrich the Lord’s Temple’.<sup>657</sup>

Valla and Poliziano clearly prized Jerome as an historical source, as an example of learning

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<sup>652</sup> See Jerome, Letter 70, 2.

<sup>653</sup> See Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2, 40-42.

<sup>654</sup> *Elegantiae*, foreword IV, 620-622: Non lingua gentiliū, non grammatica, non rhetorica, non dialectica, ceteraeque artes damnandae sunt, siquidem Apostoli lingua graeca scripserunt, sed dogmata, sed religiones, sed falsae opiniones de actione virtutum per quas in caelum scandimus. Ceterae autem scientiae atque artes in medio sunt positae, quibus et bene uti possis et male. Quapropter conemur obsecro eo pervenire, aut saltem proxime, quo luminaria illa nostrae religionis pervenerunt. Vides quam mirabili ornamento vestes Aaron distinguantur, quam arca foederis, quam templum Salomonis; per hoc mihi significari eloquentia videtur, quae, ut ait nobilis tragicus, regina rerum est et perfecta sapientia. Itaque alii ornant domos privatas, hi sunt qui student iuri civili, canonico, medicinae, philosophiae, nihil ad rem divinam conferentes: nos ornemus domum Dei, ut in eam ingredientes non ex situ ad contemptum, sed ex maiestate loci ad religionem concitentur.

<sup>655</sup> *Elegantiae*, foreword IV, 620: Nam postquam teneram illam aetatem saluberrimo sacrarum Scripturarum alimento pavit, ac in ea quam despectam habuerat scientia vires sibi fecit, iamque extra periculum positus ad lectionem gentiliū rediit, sive ut illinc eloquentiam mutuaretur, sive ut illorum bene dicta probans male dicta reprehenderet. Quod caeteri omnes Latini Graecique fecerunt, Hilarius, Ambrosius, Augustinus, Lactantius, Basilus, Gregorius, Chrysostomus aliique plurimi, qui in omni aetate praetiosas illas divini eloquii gemmas auro argentoque eloquentiae vestierunt, neque alteram propter alteram scientiam reliquerunt.

<sup>656</sup> See, for instance, the *Antibarbarorum Libri* in ASD 1-1, pages 116-118.

<sup>657</sup> VH 497-501: Noverat enim vir prudentissimus ex sterquilinio legere aurum; noverat e fructibus melleum desumere succum, araneae sua relinquens venena; et iam tum ab Aegyptiis quicquid poterat convasabat, hostium opibus Domini templum locupletaturus.

and eloquence and as a great bastion of the Catholic Faith. Erasmus had been reading Poliziano since the 1490s at the latest,<sup>658</sup> and Valla since his earliest recorded days at Steyn Abbey.<sup>659</sup> In one letter in which he praised Valla highly, Erasmus also put forward Jerome and Augustine, ‘those two leaders of the Church most perfect in learning and in their lives’, as his foremost examples of how to live.<sup>660</sup> Erasmus’ defence of Jerome’s continued reading of pagan Classical books was therefore a repetition and a development of ideas found in Poliziano’s *Miscellanea* and in Valla’s foreword, one repeated by many humanist contemporaries such as Johannes Cuno and Erasmus’ long-time friend and collaborator, Beatus Rhenanus.<sup>661</sup> We should understand that many learned men at the time were familiar with this defence of Jerome’s ‘humanist learning’ and with the above works of Poliziano and Valla, to say nothing of other works which shared similar interpretations of the *Somnium*. We should also understand that the idea of ‘spoiling the Egyptians’ was, by Erasmus’ day, a stock defence of the use of pagan Classical learning for Christian purposes. In language much like the younger Erasmus’, the University of Paris professor, Nicholas of Clamanges (1360-1437), railed against the bloated-up philosophers, wordy sophists and careerist lawyers of his day and put forward the idea of ‘spoiling the Egyptians’ in order to put worldly learning to the service of the Catholic Faith.<sup>662</sup> In the works of this French humanist of the late fourteenth century we also see ideas that are, for all intents and purposes, those which Erasmus put forward when he claimed to make philology the ‘handmaid’ of theology, the

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<sup>658</sup> See Allen 14, 75-83.

<sup>659</sup> See, for a few examples, Allen 23; Allen 24; Allen 25. See Allen 23, 13-14 for quote about Augustine and Jerome: Hoc studio duo illi insignes Ecclesiae duces, Hieronymum loquor et Augustinum...

<sup>660</sup> See Allen 24, 18-22 (from Cornelius Gerard to Erasmus): Duos itaque ecclesiae duces cum scientia tum vita perfectissimos, Hieronymum loquor et Augustinum, mihi exemplo proponis, qui cum esse una minus poterant quam volebant, animorum coniunctione paribusque studiis ita coniuncti sunt ut alter alterius animum et benevolentiam non nesciret.

<sup>661</sup> See Letter 25 in BWBR (page 48). See also Letter 26 in BWBR.

<sup>662</sup> Cited in Mésoniat, *Poetica Theologia*, 56: ...alii in supervacuis occupantur, ut qui in poeticis fabulis authorumque gentilium libris aetatem conterunt, quos in adolescentia tantum modo, non nimium moroso gradu transisse sufficit, ut non in Aegypto patriam quis aut perpetuam sibi mansionem constituat, sed peregre per eam si ita libitum est transiens, spoliatis Aegyptiis praeciosa quaeque eorum secum in terram promissionis hoc est in sacrae Scripturae decus et munimentum suffarcinatus inferat.



‘Queen of Sciences’.<sup>663</sup> Long before Erasmus’ birth, for many scholars living and writing at the University of Paris – the same university that Erasmus later found so unsatisfying and ‘scholastic’ – pagan Classical learning was also meant to be the ‘handmaid’ of theology, reigning above all other learning.<sup>664</sup>

In his paragraphs treating the *Somnium* in the *Life*, Erasmus stated that even if Jerome had claimed never to have touched Classical letters after his dream – which Jerome had, in fact, claimed in his commentaries on Paul’s letter to the Galatians – we could never believe him.<sup>665</sup> Valla had expressed this idea in his foreword to the fourth book of *Elegantiae*:

There is no lack of those who believe that what Jerome had learnt in his young age he afterwards kept in his memory. O ridiculous men and most ignorant of all learning, who believe that such a wealth of things and such learning, in which he was second to no other Christian, he was able so quickly to learn and not to forget for so long, when so few are found who are able to attain to even an hundredth-part of his learning, which learning, as was said of old, takes no less work to retain than it did to acquire.<sup>666</sup>

Not only did Valla and Erasmus both reject the possibility that Jerome had abstained from pagan letters since his dream, they also suggested that there was a large crowd of people in their day who were using Jerome’s dream in order to condemn such letters. It seems likely that Valla was exaggerating in this case. Erasmus, in his early letters and in his *Antibarbarorum libri* first written in his youth, followed in the footsteps of earlier Italian

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<sup>663</sup> Allen 182, 137-140: Quod si reclamant maiorem esse theologiam quam ut grammaticae legibus teneatur, totum interpretandi negotium de sacri Spiritus afflatu pendere, nova vero theologorum dignitas, si solis illis barbare loqui.

<sup>664</sup> Mésoniat, *Poetica Theologica*, 59-60 .

<sup>665</sup> VH 1156-1167: Aut hunc nodum explicent. Dixit apud tribunal: ‘Si unquam habuero libros saeculares, te negavi’. Cur post haec non refellit Hieronymus, quod obiicit Ruffinus de Ciceronis Dialogis quos maiore mercede fratribus scribendos locarit, de poetis quos praelegit pueris? Et in hac accusationis parte ita versatur, ut ludat magis quam refellat: nimirum crimen iudicans dignius quod rideretur quam dilueretur. Ubi deinde negat aut dissimulat Hieronymus sibi fuisse libros saeculares? Aut si negasset, quis sanus illi fuerat crediturus? Nisi forte consentaneum vero putemus, cum in libro de optimo genere interpretandi plurimos versus ad verbum ex Cicerone referat, eum omnes ex adolescentiae memoria descripsisse, non de codice. Pease suggests that Jerome seems to have relied on memory for many of his quotations. See Pease, ‘Attitude of Jerome’, 158.

<sup>666</sup> *Elegantiae*, foreword IV, 618: Tametsi non desunt qui credant cum puerili aetate illa percepisse semperque postea memoria tenuisse. O ridiculos homines et omnis doctrinae imperitos, qui opinentur eum tantam rerum copiam ac scientiam, qua nulli Christianorum cedit, aut tam cito potuisse discere aut tamdiu non potuisse dediscere, cum et rarissimi reperiantur qui centesimam partem scientiae illius adsequi possint, et non minore labore, ut antiquitus dictum est, haec facultas retineatur quam paretur.

humanists such as Valla and Poliziano, who often hurled against Italian universities, churchmen and scholars undeserved, or at least exaggerated, accusations of ‘barbarism’ and of blinkered opposition to *bonae litterae*.<sup>667</sup> In repeating such accusations and condemnation, Valla and Erasmus were towing the line of humanist rhetoric against nameless opponents to Classical learning that was already well-rooted in the contemporary republic of letters.<sup>668</sup>

Valla devoted much of his long and rhetorically charged foreword to the fourth book of *Elegantiae* to developing his ideas about the proper place of pagan Classical learning for Christians, emphasizing that the concern for eloquence was damnable only when pursued at the cost of sacred learning. He claimed that Jerome’s divine punishment was in answer to his excessive fondness for pagan Classics letters and concluded that ‘those who read over-zealously for the sake of gaining eloquence are condemned and spurned’.<sup>669</sup> Valla also stressed that eloquence was an effective weapon for the Christian faith and a necessary ingredient for good theology. Valla mocked those, once again unnamed, who claimed to condemn only ‘a concern for style’ rather than learning itself. ‘If this is the case’, Valla scoffed, ‘then all are condemned to the last man. For who indeed lacks a concern for

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<sup>667</sup> See Allen 54 (to Christian Northoff).

<sup>668</sup> Remo Guidi, ‘Frati e umanisti: ragioni di un conflitto’, in *Humanisme et Église*, 23: Una delle accuse più ricorrenti dagli umanisti (tanto laici che claustrali) fu quella della generalizzata ignoranza e rozzezza dei claustrali; è ovvio che l’addebito non si regge, e, a farlo cadere, non sono le arringhe della difesa, quanto il fondo dei Conventi Soppressi alla Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, dove rifluiscono le ricchezze librerie dei religiosi, e perché no? The influence of such rhetoric can be seen in other Europeans reading Italian humanist letters at this time, such as the German scholar Conrad Celtis. In his *Panegyris ad duces Bavariae* (*Panegyric to the Dukes of Bavaria*), after praising Jerome and Augustine for their great learning, Celtis condemned contemporary theologians and scholars, whose show of learning comprised useless quarrels about terminology and quiddities that had taken the place of the great ‘dukes of our faith’ (*duces nostrae religionis*). See 1492 Celtis, ff. 8v-9r.

<sup>669</sup> *Elegantiae*, foreword IV, 616-618: Quare non fuit illa occasio quod Ciceronianus esset Hieronymus, sed quod non Christianus, qualem se falso esse praedicaverat, cum litteras sacras despiceret. Non studium huius artis, sed nimium studium, sive huius artis sive alterius, ita ut locus melioribus non relinquatur, reprehensum. Non ceteri, sed solus Hieronymus accusatus est; alioqui ceteri simili castigatione correpti fuissent. On 614 we read: Sed cum Hieronymus quod Ciceronianus est reprehenditur, id reprehenditur quod studiosus eloquentiae esset. Ideoque damnati et repulsi intelliguntur, qui comparandae eloquentiae gratia lectitantur.

style?'<sup>670</sup> Valla asserted that anyone not knowing how elegantly to express himself and who put his thoughts into writing, especially when it came to theology, was 'most imprudent'. Were he to claim that this were done on purpose, Valla remarked, he would be 'most shameless'.<sup>671</sup> Valla believed that he 'who is unskilled in eloquence is wholly unworthy' to speak of theology and that in all Christian history only the eloquent had become 'columns of the Church', including the Apostles. To Valla's mind, the Apostle Paul shone in few things as much as in his eloquence.<sup>672</sup>

As Valla had in his *Elegantiae*, in his *Life* Erasmus also used the example of Jerome in order to develop and to promote the idea that eloquence and pagan Classical learning were necessary for good theology. Erasmus did recognize that at the time of his *Somnium*, Jerome brought to the study of pagan letters an 'immoderate and youthful' zeal, gladly taking Cicero and Plato's *Dialogues* over sacred Scripture.<sup>673</sup> This was clearly not desirable for Erasmus, but for him such misplaced enthusiasm was part of the larger process of Jerome's development into a peerless Christian scholar. Writing of Jerome's early education, Erasmus remarked that Jerome undertook the study of rhetoric and of all pagan learning, especially history, cosmography and chronicles, because he believed 'that up to that time theology in the Latin world was practically incapable of effective speech'. According to Erasmus, with the help of such studies and by writing with a 'dignity of style' worthy of 'the majesty of

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<sup>670</sup> *Elegantiae*, foreword to IV, 616: At ornatus ipse dicendi reprehensus est, non scientia. Si ita est, omnes ad unum reprehenduntur. Quis enim caret ornatu ?

<sup>671</sup> *Elegantiae*, foreword to IV, 620: Qui vero eleganter loqui nescit, et cogitationes suas litteris mandat, in theologia praesertim, impudentissimus est; et si id consulto facere se ait, insanissimus; quamquam nemo est qui nolit eleganter et facunde dicere; quod cum ipsis non contingit, videri volunt, ut sunt perversi, nolle, aut certe non debere sic dicere.

<sup>672</sup> *Elegantiae*, foreword to IV, 620: At qui ignarus eloquentiae est, hunc indignum prorsus qui de theologia loquatur existimo. Et certe soli eloquentes, quales ii quos enumeravi, columnae ecclesiae sunt, etiam ut ab Apostolis usque repetas, inter quos mihi Paulus nulla alia re eminere quam eloquentia videtur.

<sup>673</sup> VH 553-561: Inter haec vero dum immodico quodam et iuvenili calore et puerilium amore studiorum plus satis indulget exprimendis M. Tulli, Platonisque Dialogis, nam id tum, ni fallor, agebat, et hos magis nititur effingere quam sermonem apostolicum, somnio divinitus immisso, raptus ad tribunal Dei, accusatus quod Ciceronianus esset non Christianus, denique plagis emendatus, sibi redditus est, ut ipse refert in epistola cuius initium, *Audi filia*. Qua de re quid sentiam fortasse nonnihili dicturi sumus, cum ad eum locum erit ventum.

Christian theology', Jerome hoped to attract pagans who had hitherto scorned Christians, whom they thought childish and coarse.<sup>674</sup> According to Erasmus, because of Jerome's studies in his youth with Rome's best teachers and no less to his long studies in the Mediterranean and in the Holy Land, 'nothing at all was overlooked that contributed to the training of a glorious Doctor of the Church and a truly great theologian'. This 'prevented any gaps in his learning or even a slight imperfection in his life that would lessen and impair the authority of his teaching'.<sup>675</sup> Still, according to Erasmus, Jerome undertook 'the duties of a theologian' only after his many travels, study in Constantinople and gaining 'great prudence born of experience over a long period of time...by having acquired the appropriate learning through association with many of the greatest scholars'. Jerome's example was in marked contrast with the unnamed boors of sixteenth-century European universities and monasteries who, 'totally ignorant of all the arts and lacking refinement', and 'relying on a few paltry sophisms and on a smattering of Aristotelian philosophy...rushed into the profession of theology with unwashed feet and hands'.<sup>676</sup>

Valla's foreword to the fourth book of *Elegantiae* and Erasmus' *Life* both started from the example of Jerome in order to promote similar ideas with similar arguments; to wit, that Jerome's *Somnium* did not condemn and could not be used to condemn the study of pagan Classical letters and that proper, measured study of these letters was as necessary to good theology as its excessive study was wrong. Having known Valla's *Elegantiae* since his youth,

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<sup>674</sup> VH 236-244: In rhetorica tamen sese studiosius exercuit, degustatis omnibus, sed his praecipue quae propius ad eam conferant facultatem, historia, cosmographia, et antiquitatis notitia: partim quod intelligeret apud Latinos ad id usque temporis paene infantem esse theologiam, et ob hanc causam permultos a divinorum voluminum abhorrere lectione, sperans futurum ut plures sacris litteris delectarentur, si quis theologiae maiestatem dignitate sermonis aequasset; partim ut esset aliquando quod ethnicis obicere posset, Christianos ut infantes et elingues despicientibus.

<sup>675</sup> VH 522-526: Quid multis? Nihil omnino praetermissum est, quod ad inclitum Ecclesiae doctorem ac vere magnum theologum instituendum pertinebat: ne quid usquam deesset eruditioni, aut necubi vita parum emendata, doctrinae minueret et elevaret auctoritatem.

<sup>676</sup> VH 793-798: His instructus praesidiis vir prudentissimus theologi munus aggressus est: cum hodie quidam omnium bonarum litterarum prorsus rudes et ἄμουσοι, pauculis sophismatibus et male degustata Aristotelis philosophia freti, pedibus ac manibus illotis irruant in theologiae professionem.

in his *Life* Erasmus developed ideas found in Valla and in Poliziano and probably shared by many of his humanist colleagues. That Erasmus and Valla were not alone in their interpretations of Jerome is clear in the example of Jean Gerson's sermon in honour of Saint Michael, delivered before the King of France on 29 September 1392. Gerson strongly defended the study of pagan literature, saying that if to read the pagan Classics were wrong, then Jerome, Augustine, Bernard, Paul, Cyprian and Origen were all in great error, which, according to him, 'would be an unbearable example of foolhardiness'.<sup>677</sup> Gerson also argued that pagan Classical literature was essential to good theology and that it was 'false' and 'rash' to claim that it was wrong to study the rhetorical foundations provided by such literature, without which, according to Gerson, 'the saints would not have wanted to write, and perhaps would not have been able to write, their books with such pleasing eloquence and with such deepness of reasoning'.<sup>678</sup> In his sermon Gerson likewise interpreted the *Somnium* to mean that reading pagan Classical literature was not wrong, but that its excessive reading was wrong: 'Saint Jerome observed that he was beaten because, owing to his love of Cicero, the books of divine law seemed somewhat silly to him'.<sup>679</sup> These are only a few of the similarities that we see between Gerson and Erasmus and Valla, and Gerson's sermon is but one example of evidence that Valla and Erasmus were responding to ideas which had been widely debated for more than a century before the *Life*'s publication. In his work *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, Petrarch pointed out that even after the *Somnium*, Jerome

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<sup>677</sup> Cited in Mésoniat, *Poetica Theologica*, 55: Nolo tamen exemplum istud ad hoc traducatis ut abiiciendos prorsus aestimetis infidelium libros, velut quidam false argumentari satagunt. Alioquin et ipse postmodum Hieronymus, et Augustinus et Bernardus et ut altius repetam, Paulus, Cyprianus, Origenes, immo ut generalius extendam omnes philosophantes, omnes legistae, medici omnes, culpabiliter omnes erraverunt; quod dicere intolerabilis est temeritas.

<sup>678</sup> Mésoniat, *Poetica Theologica*, 55: ...sanctorum insuper laudibus contrarium qui dicta sua sanctosque libros suos cum tanta eloquii venustate et profunditate sententiarum absque gentilium litteris componere neque voluerunt neque fortassis potuerunt.

<sup>679</sup> Mésoniat, *Poetica Theologica*, 55: Modus attamen habendus est, fateor, ut illae scientiae non dominae sed ancillae ministraeque sint; sic quod theologiae praecipuus honor, summa auctoritas et frequentius studium a theologis semper impendatur. Et hoc non satis sobrie beatus Hieronymus, ipso teste, tunc cum reverberatus est observabat quia prae affectatione ad Tullium sibi desipiebant divinae legis libri.

never forsook Ciceronian style. He also foreshadowed Valla and Erasmus by noting that ‘Cicero, when read faithfully and modestly, did not hurt Jerome, or anyone else, whereas he has done much to help all to attain to a better eloquence, and many to live better lives’.<sup>680</sup> Morisi Guerra has claimed that in Petrarch’s writings we see already ‘all the themes which recur in the discussions of the following century; above all the affirmation of the value of Classical studies as a school of eloquence, not subordinated to the demands of Christian culture’.<sup>681</sup> Although I find it hard to accept Morisi Guerra’s contention that the ‘Christian humanist’ pursuit of eloquence sought to lift eloquence out of its ‘subordinate’ position to Christian theology, we have seen much evidence which confirms her idea that polemic about the abuse and the proper use of pagan Classical literature by Christians, even if sometimes ‘marginal and misleading’, was heated. This polemic was especially heated in the humanist camp, including as it did lights of humanist learning such as Petrarch, Salutati,<sup>682</sup> Bruni,<sup>683</sup> Piccolomini, Poggio and countless other admirers and purveyors of good letters, famous and unknown, religious and lay, up to Erasmus’ lifetime and beyond it. We also see that for many of Italy’s most renowned humanists during this same period, Jerome was a ‘patron of Christian humanists’, if not *the* patron.<sup>684</sup> This widespread attitude towards Jerome and the Church Fathers among Italian humanists for generations before Erasmus’ work is in line with Kristeller’s belief that it is hard to remark any true divide between the Northern European and

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<sup>680</sup> *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, cited in Anna Morisi Guerra, ‘Leggenda’, 12: Non dissimulo equidem me Ciceronis ingenio et eloquentia delectari, quibus, ut innumeros sileam, Hieronymum ipsum usque adeo delectatum video, ut nec visione illa terribili, nec Ruffini iurgiis sic stilum inde dimoverit, quin Ciceronianum aliquid redoleret. Quod ipsemet sentiens de hoc ipso alicubi se excusat. Nec vero Cicero fideliter ac modeste lectus aut illi nocuit, aut cuique alteri, cum ad eloquentiam cunctis, ad vitam multis valde profuerit.

<sup>681</sup> Morisi Guerra, ‘Leggenda’, 12.

<sup>682</sup> See Jill Kraye, ‘Pagan Philosophy and Patristics in Erasmus and His Contemporaries’, in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 31: 1 (2011): 33-60.

<sup>683</sup> Mario Naldini, *La tradizione patristica alle fonti della cultura europea* (Fiesole: Nardini, 1995), 112.

<sup>684</sup> See Morisi Guerra, *Leggenda*, 16-17. See Dill’s quotation from Leonardo Bruni’s *De eruditione et litteris* (finished between 1422 and 1429) in Dill I, 17: Eruditionem autem intelligo non vulgarem istam et perturbatam, sed legitimam illam et ingenuam, quae litterarum peritiam cum rerum scientia coniungit; qualis in Lactantio Firmiano, qualis in Aurelio Augustino, qualis in Hieronymo fuit, summis profecto theologis ac perfectis in litteratura viris. Nunc vero, qui eam scientiam profitentur, pudendum est quam parum persciant litterarum.

the Italian Renaissance, and much harder to try to emphasize the Italian Renaissance's more 'secular' concerns and character.<sup>685</sup> Many contemporary Italian humanists' important and lasting connections with the institutional Church and with reforming movements within monastic communities make this idea more or less indefensible.<sup>686</sup> Lay humanists from Petrarch to Poliziano<sup>687</sup> and religious humanists from Antonino Pierozzi to Ambrogio Traversari<sup>688</sup> prized Jerome as a source of knowledge, a model of Latin style and a great example of truly Christian life and learning. Such enthusiasm for Jerome was as widespread in the world of plastic arts as it was in writing.<sup>689</sup>

In this chapter we have seen that Erasmus wrote his *Life* within an established humanist secondary literature in which the re-discovery of Christian Antiquity went hand in hand with enthusiasm for pagan Classical literature.<sup>690</sup> Although Erasmus was also very enthusiastic about humanist learning and writers in his own day, he nevertheless ranked Jerome far above any of his humanist contemporaries:

And yet our age has seen outstanding men who would not have been deemed lacking in eloquence even in the time of Cicero. Chief among them are Lorenzo Valla, Ermolao Barbaro, Angelo Poliziano, Giovanni Pico and our own Rodolphus Agricola. There are others also whom I by no means condemn, but since these are the distinguished ones they will serve as the standard of appraisal. Jerome to some

<sup>685</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Erasmus from an Italian Perspective', *Renaissance Quarterly* 23: 1 (1970): 7.

<sup>686</sup> See Cécile Caby, 'I padri nell'osservanza Camaldolese: uso, riuso, abuso', in *Tradizioni patristiche*, 176-177.

<sup>687</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 85. Rice cites Petrarch's *Familiars* 22, 10 and *Familiars* 2, 9. See the text of the latter letter in *Epistole di Francesca Petrarca*, ed. Ugo Dotti (Torino: Unione Tipografica, 1978), 95-96.

<sup>688</sup> See Traversari cited in Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers*, 123: (letter to Giovanni Lucido Gonzaga, writing about Jerome's letters) Dum essem adolescentulus, et tuae ferma aetatis, nullius mihi doctrina ignitior, nullius efficacior visa est, potentiorque ad excitandos actus ad virtutum studia, execrationemque vitiorum. Adeo autem illas ipsius epistolas mihi familiares effeceram, ut multa ex ei capita memoriter referre possem.

<sup>689</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 256: (about Carpaccio's *Saint Augustin in his Study*) Et l'on ne s'étonnera pas de reconnaître, sous les traits de l'évêque d'Hippone, le cardinal Bessarion, le principal artisan de la réunion des Églises d'Orient et d'Occident lors du Concile de Ferrare, puis de Florence. Moine de saint Basile à Constantinople, ordonné prêtre en 1431, Bessarion est l'un des grands humanistes qui ait marqué de sa forte empreinte le Quattrocento italien... Tout le désigne à l'attention de ses contemporains, et bon nombre de *Saints Jérôme humanistes*, semblent à première vue retracer son portrait. See on page 273: Ainsi s'achève une merveilleuse exploration dans une galerie renouvelée de portraits, à la recherche de visages familiers, reconnus, à la découverte aussi de certains autres plus inattendus. De Niccolo Albergati à Nicolas de Cuse, de Bessarion à Alphonse V, les grands noms d'un siècle riche en hommes célèbres se sont drapés dans la pose majestueuse du saint en son cabinet d'étude, manifeste politique, idéal de mesure et de grandeur, défense et illustration d'un mode de vie.

<sup>690</sup> Rice, 'The Renaissance Idea of Christian Antiquity', 17. See Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 91-98.

extent despised eloquence; his attention was drawn in different directions by many studies which generally rust over the polished surface of style. These men throughout their entire lives were engaged only in those literary activities which contribute to the embellishment of style. But given the same subject-matter, given the same rules of Christian speech, we shall see that not even one of them attains the eloquence of Jerome.<sup>691</sup>

These words should not be taken out of the broader context of Erasmus' introductory letters, in which he often offered extravagant praise and, some thirteen years later, seemed to put Augustine ahead of Jerome in his introduction to the 1529 Froben edition of Augustine's works.<sup>692</sup> Instead, we should understand that even though Erasmus took seriously and strongly encouraged the eloquence and the learning of his age, at least from the 1516 Jerome *Edition*'s publication until his death about twenty years later, for Erasmus the Church Fathers remained the first-fruits of all eloquence.

To take one telling example of the breadth of contemporary reverence of the Church Fathers, at the beginning of book three of his *De honesta disciplina*, Crinito recounted a discussion between Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) and Pico della Mirandola that took place before Lorenzo il Magnifico.<sup>693</sup> In this conversation, Savonarola, reported Crinito, warned Lorenzo that pagans were often wrong, and often fooled others. He warned, moreover, that reading Plato leads to an 'insolent soul' and that Aristotle teaches 'impiety'.<sup>694</sup> Hearing this, Pico laughed and began a powerful defence of ancient learning, including that

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<sup>691</sup> VH 1385-1399: Et tamen eximios viros nostras vidit aetas, et qui ne Ciceronis quidem saeculo inter elingues habiti fuissent, quorum praecipui sunt Laurentius Valla, Hermolaus Barbarus, Angelus Politianus, Ioannes Picus, et noster Rodolphus Agricola. Sunt et alii, quos haudquaquam contemno, sed ex his quoniam insignes sunt, res aestimabitur. Hieronymus ex parte contempsit eloquentiam, tam multis distractus est studiis, quae dicendi politiam rubigine solent obducere. Hi per omnem aetatem in his modo versati sunt litteris, quae ad dicendi faciunt ornamenta: et tamen detur idem argumentum, sit eadem Christiane loquendi lex, videbimus nec horum quempiam Hieronymianam eloquentiam assequi. Primum enim cum praecipua pars eloquentiae sit et fons, ut inquit Horatius, res de quibus dicturus sis, penitus habere cognitae, quis non statim intelligit quam multis partibus hic potior sit Hieronymus?

<sup>692</sup> See Allen 1855, 18-29.

<sup>693</sup> 1508 Crinito, f. 10v (book 3, chapter 2 of *De honesta disciplina*).

<sup>694</sup> 1508 Crinito, f. 10v: Cave inquit Laurentiane, ne verba pro rebus accipias. Nam qui veteres philosophos in academiam petrahunt, perfacile quidem vel falluntur ipsi, vel alios fallunt. Platon enim ad animi insolentiam, Aristoteles vero ad impietatem instruit, quo magis te inquit Laurentiane hortamur, ut ipsis philosophiae spaciis atque umbraculis ad Salomonis porticum deficias, in qua certissima vitae ratio atque veritas continetur.



of the ancient East, stating that Plato had almost approached the ‘Hebrew Truth’ and labelling him ‘Moses’ Greek-speaking brother’.<sup>695</sup> Far from being offended at Pico’s speech, we are told that after it, Savonarola embraced Pico, exclaiming:

You alone in our age, Pico, have mastered the philosophy of all the ancients as well as the precepts and laws of the Christian religion, such that your knowledge, embracing almost all things, might worthily be compared with those ancients Jerome, Augustine, Basil, Gregory and Dionysius.<sup>696</sup>

In this story the arch-humanist Pico, the mysterious Savonarola and the narrator Crinito were united in their respect for these Church Fathers’ Christian and pagan Classical learning and in their belief that the Fathers were the foremost examples of Christian learnedness and holiness. Later in *De honesta disciplina*, after citing the many languages that Jerome was said to have learned in the apocryphal letter of Augustine to Cyrillus, Crinito remarked that although ‘many do not believe that this letter should be ascribed to Augustine’, we could nonetheless be sure from Jerome’s letter *Schedulas quas misisti* that Jerome’s teachers were Donatus, Victorinus, Gregorius Nazianzenus and his Jewish Hebrew teacher Barbanus.<sup>697</sup> Crinito’s *De honesta disciplina* showed unmistakable evidence of its author’s admiration of the Church Fathers and especially of Jerome, whom he calls ‘our greatest man in almost all disciplines’.<sup>698</sup> While we must understand that Erasmus and other humanists could and did criticize some of the Fathers’ teachings and actions,<sup>699</sup> Erasmus stood in a long line of

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<sup>695</sup> 1508 Crinito, f. 10v: Nam et Pythagorae divina illa philosophia quam magicen nuncuparunt, magna ex parte ad Mosis disciplinas pertinebat, ut qui ad Hebraeos quoque eorumque doctrinas in Aegyptum usque perrexerit, pluraque illorum sacra atque mysteria intellexerit. Nam Platonis etiam eruditio (ut constat) ad Hebraicam veritatem fere accedit. Ex quo permulti eum germanum Mosem dixerunt, sed graece loquentem.

<sup>696</sup> 1508 Crinito, f. 11r: Quibus relatis Hieronymus Savonerola Io. Picum complexus et ‘unus tu’, inquit ‘es Pice aetate nostra, qui omnium veterum philosophiam ac religionis Christianae praecepta et leges percalleas, ut haec tua quidem rerum poene omnium cognitio, antiquioribus illis Hieronymo, Augustino, Basiliis, Gregoriisque, ac Dionysiis merito conferri possit’. Nam alia ibidem multo Io. Picus de Christo legibusque eius ac religione copiose disseruit, ex Chaldaicis atque Syriacis thesauris, quod alibi commodius recensui.

<sup>697</sup> 1508 Crinito, f. 24r/v.

<sup>698</sup> 1508 Crinito, f. 24r: Hieronymus autem noster in omnibus prope disciplinis vir summus, non minore studio ac diligentia honestis artibus incubuit.

<sup>699</sup> See Georges Chantraine, ‘Érasme et saint Basile’, in *Irenikon* 52 (1979): 461. See Allen 1581, 543-544, for this quote. See also, Irena Backus, ‘Erasmus and the Antitrinitarians’, in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 11: 1 (1991): 53-66.

humanist scholars, mostly Italians, who admired, honoured and interpreted Jerome and his studies for their value to Christian life and belief and for their potential to bring these back to a purer standard more readily found in the Patristic age.<sup>700</sup> Stinger has claimed that ‘the Patristic Church...was the model of faith and holiness and the inspiration to reform’ for Traversari who, like Erasmus, had read Jerome’s letters so often that he was said to know many of them by heart.<sup>701</sup> From looking at Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome*, we can conclude that Erasmus drew deeply from fifteenth-century Italian editions, interpretations and readings of Jerome and of other Church Fathers.<sup>702</sup> For their part, these scholars had inherited and built on Mediaeval precedents.<sup>703</sup> Although I cannot pursue this investigation in this thesis, it seems likely to me that closer examination of Mediaeval writings about Jerome and comparisons of these with Renaissance humanists’ writings on the saint will reveal many important similarities, and more continuity than disagreement.

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<sup>700</sup> Kristeller, ‘Erasmus from an Italian Perspective’, 8.

<sup>701</sup> Stinger, *Humanism*, 196; 123.

<sup>702</sup> Stinger, *Humanism*, 225. Paul Oskar Kristeller, ‘Erasmus from an Italian Perspective’, 7.

<sup>703</sup> Gian Carlo Garfagnini, ‘La memoria dei padri in Girolamo Savonarola’ in *Tradizioni patristiche*, 159.

## PART I: CONCLUSION

In the above chapters we have seen many examples in which Erasmus' *Life* fit into and borrowed from an established tradition of interpreting Jerome. In order to close this treatment of 'Erasmus as historian', I would first like to turn our attention back to the fourteenth-century *Hieronymianus*. Although its author Giovanni Andrea did appear to accept a great many 'miraculous' stories about Jerome, we have seen that he also showed 'critical' sense,<sup>704</sup> especially in the third part of the *Hieronymianus*, in which he gathered together many early Christian writings praising Jerome, including passages from the writings of Damasus, Augustine, Prosper, Isidorus, Igbertus, Severus, Cassiodorus, Sidonius, the Venerable Bede and Gelasius. According to Andrea, such writers' testimony alone, 'leaving aside all other evidence', would be enough 'to compel all Catholics' to venerate Jerome as they ought to do.<sup>705</sup> Widely known and printed throughout contemporary Europe – including printed editions at Cologne in 1482, at Paris in 1511, at Vienna in 1514 and also at Basel in 1514 at the publishing house of Adam Petri, who had taken over the press of his uncle Johannes Petri, a colleague of Johannes Amerbach and Johannes Froben – I believe it very likely that in the course of his many readings about Jerome, Erasmus had looked at and read at least parts of the *Hieronymianus* and may have used it as a source for his *Life of Jerome*.<sup>706</sup> In the beginning of the *Life*, Erasmus cited Prosperus and Severus as trustworthy sources and put forward his belief that sources contemporary to Jerome were the best. The third part of the *Hieronymianus* also vouched for the superiority of such contemporary sources. Andrea's

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<sup>704</sup> In his summaries of Jerome's letters in part four of the *Hieronymianus*, Andrea does not at all, for instance, mention the *Somnium Ciceronis* in his write-up of *Audi filia*.

<sup>705</sup> 1514 *Hieronymianus*, f. 49v: Tertiam nunc huius operis partem aggrediar ponens certa sanctorum et auctorum dicta. Quae beatum Hieronymum (cui nihil deerat laude dignum) eleganter extollunt. Quae sola talium testimonia (suppressis omnibus supra et infra descriptis) sufficienter (immo abunde) artant catholicos omnes ad venerationem ipsius. Quae tamen sufficienter specifice laudari sermonis humani penuria non permittit, cum omnibus numeris perfecta virtus et omne virentis doctrinae genus vigerent in illo...

<sup>706</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 37.

and Erasmus' use of the same sources was probably not coincidental since sources about Jerome were, after all, limited. It is also no coincidence that for both scholars, the best way to understand Jerome's life and legacy was to turn to his writings and to the writings of his contemporaries. Notwithstanding the many differences in their methods and in their beliefs, Andrea, as much as Erasmus, wanted to understand the 'true' Jerome, accurately to portray his likeness and to help his contemporary Christians better to understand Jerome's meaning to the Church and to their own lives. For Erasmus and for Andrea, the best place to look in this effort to explain and to interpret Jerome was back at the *fontes* of early Christianity. Erasmus' *Life* included some interpretations of Jerome's life, times and legacy that closely approached the 'modern' narrative about the Doctor of the Church. Nevertheless, even if Erasmus' *Life* was probably the most thorough and the most eloquently written as of 1516, he was not the first scholar to create such a 'modern' narrative. What is more, we have seen that not only were the 'critical' observations of Erasmus' *Life* foreshadowed or shared by prior writers, we must also qualify how truly 'critical' Erasmus' interpretations of Jerome were.

I also think it worth questioning how well received Erasmus' *Life* truly was. The foregoing part of this thesis has privileged the *Life* in part because it has been so privileged by modern secondary works. Clausi was right to point out, however, that ever since Ferguson's 1933 edition of Erasmus' works including the *Life* (until then the *Life* was relatively hard to find since it was not included in the 1703-1706 Leiden edition of Erasmus' works), scholars have developed and spread a 'skewed' view of this work not properly taking into account its original context and its relatively minor place in the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>707</sup> Although there is abundant evidence pointing to the importance of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, which sold out quickly, there is not much evidence leading one to believe that the *Life* was

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<sup>707</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 95.

extraordinarily important to contemporaries.<sup>708</sup> In the evidence that Rice cites in order to prove the ‘rapturous’ reception of the *Edition*, the *Life* does not figure.<sup>709</sup> From looking at Irmgard Bezzel’s 1979 bibliography of Erasmus’ books printed in Europe in his lifetime and after it, we begin to understand something of why Erasmus’ *Life* made only a very limited appearance in Alison Frazier’s investigation of Mediaeval and early Renaissance saints’ lives.<sup>710</sup> Judging from the publishing activities of Johannes Froben and of other contemporary printers, it is clear that Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome* was anything but a best-seller, and its printing was dwarfed by that of Erasmus’ other works, even relatively minor ones. To be sure, Erasmus’ *Life* was included in the 1516 *Edition*, in the 1524-1526 Froben edition of Jerome’s works and in the 1533-1534 Chevallon edition of Jerome’s works. Therefore it did reach a large audience. Perhaps against the wishes of its author, Froben also published Erasmus’ *Life* separately in 1519, as did the Mannheim printer Johannes Schöffer later in 1521.<sup>711</sup> There was also an unauthorized 1517 printing of the *Life* at Eucharius Cervicornus’ press at Cologne.<sup>712</sup> Pabel has rightly remarked, however, that the 1516 *Edition* was the *Life*’s ‘true home’.<sup>713</sup> The number of editions may not always reflect an edition’s importance to buyers and to readers of its day, but early sixteenth-century printers like Johannes Froben quite simply did not go on printing flops out of their hearts’ goodness, nor did they hold back from printing or even from pirating best-sellers. Froben himself, after all, pirated the 1508 Aldine edition of Erasmus’ *Adages* in 1513 and thereby gained Erasmus’ attention and admiration.<sup>714</sup> Erasmus’ *Life* was surely a better known work than the life of Jerome written

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<sup>708</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, pages 65-81, where we see abundant evidence of the *Edition*’s importance but little or nothing to suggest that the *Life* was important to contemporaries. Gerard Morinck’s praise of the *Life* in Allen 1994 is not at all conclusive.

<sup>709</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 119.

<sup>710</sup> See Frazier, *Possible Lives*, pages 102; 312-313.

<sup>711</sup> See Irmgard Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke des 16. Jahrhunderts in Bayerischen Bibliotheken: ein bibliographisches Verzeichnis* (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1979). See entries 1058 and 1059.

<sup>712</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 94-95.

<sup>713</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 176.

<sup>714</sup> See Allen 283, 152-159.

by his friend and fellow monk from Steyn, Cornelius Gerard (or Cornelius Aurelius), who also finished his biography in 1516.<sup>715</sup> The *Life*'s relative success notwithstanding, its publication history cuts a poor figure when compared with that of Erasmus' other works.

Therefore, contrary to what some more recent secondary literature has suggested, from looking at the record of Froben's publication of Erasmus' works, we have reason to suspect that his *Life* was a flop, at least by Erasmus' standards. Whereas his *Life* was only published three times separate from the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus' *Paraclesis*, itself one of the introductory paratexts to 1516 Froben *New Testament* and therefore comparable to the *Life*, saw at least twenty-one printings in separate editions in Erasmus' lifetime alone, including at least six printings with the Frobens at Basel (1516, 1519, 1522, 1523, 1524, 1530), one in Leipzig (1519), one in Paris (1519), one in Strasbourg (1519) and one in Lyon (1532).<sup>716</sup> Without going into much detail about Erasmus' other major works such as the *Adages*, of which there were over sixty editions published in Erasmus' lifetime,<sup>717</sup> the *Colloquies*,<sup>718</sup> the *Handbook of the Christian Knight*<sup>719</sup> and the *Praise of Folly*,<sup>720</sup> even works far less outstanding in the secondary literature today than Erasmus' *Life*, such as his *Modus orandi Deum* (*How to Pray to God*),<sup>721</sup> his *Antibarbarorum Libri*,<sup>722</sup> his *Panegyric* in honour of Prince Phillip of Austria,<sup>723</sup> his *Querela Pacis* (*Complaint of Peace*)<sup>724</sup> and his *Ratio seu*

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<sup>715</sup> Aurelius' *Vita gloriosi Hieronymi* is now found only in manuscript at Deventer's Athenaeum Library (shelf-mark 111 D 11 KL). Dill brings this manuscript up in Dill I, 64, note 29, in which he quotes a 1516 letter from Alardus of Amsterdam to Erasmus. See Allen 443, 35-36.

<sup>716</sup> See Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 1396-1417.

<sup>717</sup> Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 46-110.

<sup>718</sup> There were more than fifty editions of the *Colloquies* published in Erasmus' lifetime alone. See Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 434-480.

<sup>719</sup> There were about thirty editions of this work published in Erasmus' lifetime. See Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 845-875.

<sup>720</sup> There were at least twenty-four editions of the *Moriae Encomium* published in Erasmus' lifetime. See Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 1296-1320.

<sup>721</sup> Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 1284-1290.

<sup>722</sup> Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 157-164.

<sup>723</sup> Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 15-22.

<sup>724</sup> Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 1667-1683.

*Methodus Compendio Pervenienti ad veram Theologiam* (Way or Method of Attaining to True Theology),<sup>725</sup> all got far more attention from contemporary printers and, we might gather, from contemporary readers, than Erasmus' *Life* ever did. In Erasmus' lifetime Johannes Froben and his son Jerome even published Erasmus' *Liturgy on the Holy House of Mary at Loreto* three times (1525, 1525 and 1529),<sup>726</sup> a courtesy that he did not give the *Life*.

What we have seen in the above chapters leads me to think that Erasmus' *Life* was not a long thought-out work but rather something added on with haste as the 1516 Jerome *Edition* went into its last stages of printing. Most pre-Erasmian printed editions of Jerome's letters and works included an older life of the saint, usually *Plaerosque Nimirum*. The 1516 *Edition* broke new ground by including a wholly new life of Jerome written especially for it, even if it mirrored the long-established tradition of framing Jerome's letters with a biography.<sup>727</sup> Much like the suggestion to translate the Greek New Testament into Latin, which Erasmus had not foreseen doing when he came to Basel, it seems likely to me that Johannes Froben asked Erasmus to write the *Life* in order to introduce his 1516 Jerome *Edition*. At the very least we can say that Erasmus mentions the *Life* nowhere in his letters from this period when Erasmus wrote time and again of his commentaries for the *Edition*. Clausi is 'dumbfounded' that Erasmus nowhere mentioned the *Life* in his introductory letter to the 1516 *Edition* addressed to Archbishop William Warham,<sup>728</sup> but this could have been so simply because Erasmus had written the letter to Warham before he had written the *Life*. Fritz Husner's analysis of the manuscripts of the *Life* shows beyond doubt that the final, printed text of Erasmus' *Life* was significantly different from the final manuscript.<sup>729</sup> Husner also concludes that 'surely the

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<sup>725</sup> Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 1688-1701.

<sup>726</sup> Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke*, entries 1823-1825.

<sup>727</sup> See Dill's section on 'die grösseren Hieronymus-Editionen vor 1516', in Dill I, 43-57.

<sup>728</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 63.

<sup>729</sup> Fritz Husner, 'Die Handschrift der Scholien des Erasmus von Rotterdam zu den Hieronymusbriefen', in *Festschrift Gustav Binz* (Basel: B. Schwabe and Company, 1935), 135.

indexes, but probably also the introductory letter and the *Life of Jerome* were the last parts of the work to be printed', and this in the hurried and chaotic last days of work on the *Edition*.<sup>730</sup> I cannot prove my hunch that Erasmus wrote the *Life* in a hurried blur, a hunch which Clausi and Pabel both seem to entertain,<sup>731</sup> but we can say without any doubt that when it came to the time he spent on it and to the care that he gave it, Erasmus' undertaking to write Jerome's *Life* pales in comparison to his undertaking to edit Jerome's letters and to comment on them.

Impressive as Erasmus' *Life* may be to us now, and for whatever reasons, from what we have seen in the foregoing part of this thesis we can conclude that the *Life* is not, was not and was never meant to be a watershed in the history of history. It is especially hard to say with Olin that Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* was 'one of Erasmus' most interesting and important compositions', or to agree with Rice that the *Life* marked 'a turning point in Renaissance hagiography' and 'the cleanest possible break with the past' when it comes to method and to result.<sup>732</sup> Still harder is it responsibly to call Erasmus 'another Columbus' in the field of history-writing.<sup>733</sup> For many of us today the *Life* may seem to be 'one of the most important creations of Christian humanism and one of Erasmus' best works', but this probably says more about us than it does about Erasmus and his contemporary readers.<sup>734</sup> For Erasmus, his editorial work for the *Edition* was clearly of far more importance than his work on the *Life*, and it was surely of far greater scope. For this reason we shall now turn to look at Erasmus' activities as an editor and as a commentator for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. Erasmus himself believed that he had helped to 'resurrect' Jerome for the betterment of all living Christendom through his commentaries, not through his *Life*. Whereas the latter was one of a great many

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<sup>730</sup> Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 136.

<sup>731</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 247.

<sup>732</sup> Rice, 'Renaissance Idea', 19.

<sup>733</sup> Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula*, 154.

<sup>734</sup> Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme*, 146.



lives of a very popular saint, Erasmus was the first to give extensive commentaries to Jerome's letters in the humanist style.<sup>735</sup>

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<sup>735</sup> Dill I, 5-6: Man muß aber festhalten, dass Erasmus als Hieronymus-Komentator durchaus ein Pionier war. Es existierten zwei mittelalterliche und zu Erasmus' Zeit gedruckte Kommentare zu Hieronymus' Bibelprologen, die er aber nur heranzog, um sich über sie lustig zu machen. Zu den *Epistulae* gab es meines Wissens nur je einen gedruckten (humanistischen) Kommentar zu *Epist.* 8 und 52.

# **PART TWO:**

## **ERASMUS AS EDITOR AND COMMENTATOR**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In their attempt to bring back standards of learning lost in what Erasmus called the many ‘shipwrecks’ that had rocked Europe since Jerome’s lifetime,<sup>736</sup> Charlemagne and his advisors, including Alcuin of York, chose Jerome’s letters to serve as the model for letter-writing in the Carolingian realms.<sup>737</sup> They therefore gathered together scribes and scholars and carefully put together manuscripts of Jerome’s letters on parchment at great cost.<sup>738</sup> From late Antiquity and Charlemagne’s court to the Papal courts of Leo X and that of his twentieth-century successor Benedict XV,<sup>739</sup> Jerome has won admirers owing to his letters, his commentaries on the Bible and other works such as his *De viribus illustribus* (*Catalogue of Famous Men*). Jerome’s status as a Christian writer was once so important that almost any reasonably well-educated European Christian during the thousand years between Jerome’s death and the early fifteenth century would have read at least some of his works. Mediaeval clerics such as Gerbert of Aurillac, Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Abelard and John of Salisbury, for example, had considerable knowledge of Jerome’s letters and Biblical commentaries.<sup>740</sup> So did the Angelic Doctor Thomas Aquinas and the newest Doctor of the Church (as of February 2013), Hildegard of Bingen.<sup>741</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> Allen 396, 369-372.

<sup>737</sup> See *Scribes and Scholars*, 102-106.

<sup>738</sup> See duQuesnay Adams, ‘Jerome: The Classic Correspondent’, 2.

<sup>739</sup> See Benedict XV’s encyclical letter *Spiritus Paraclitus*, published on 15 September 1920.

<sup>740</sup> Adams, ‘Jerome: The Classic Correspondent’, 3-4.

<sup>741</sup> See Angela Carlevaris, ‘Ildegarda e la Patristica’, in *Hildegard of Bingen: The Context of her Thought and Art*, eds. Charles Burnett and Peter Dronke (London: The Warburg Institute, 1998), 65-80.

In the Mediaeval period and in the years of the early Renaissance, Jerome's example inspired men from separate Spanish and Italian Augustinian communities to found new, 'Hieronymite' religious movements. Loup of Olmeda (1370-1433), founder of one such 'Hieronymite' community based in Lombardy, wrote a rule for his community based on Jerome's letters and won its approval from the appropriate Roman authorities in 1429.<sup>742</sup> From Sant'Onofrio on Rome's Gianicolo Hill to the New World, the Hieronymites grew to become an important movement in the Catholic Church of the Renaissance period.<sup>743</sup> For those not belonging to such movements, Jerome's writings were still a treasure and gave them a helpful example of learned piety at work.<sup>744</sup> We see Jerome's importance to Benedictine monks carved in statues and included in paintings throughout the Palladian complex at Venice's island San Giorgio, where I have had the privilege of editing this thesis. His importance to the Camaldolese order was embodied in the humanist monk and reformer Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439),<sup>745</sup> who claimed to know many of Jerome's letters by memory and to have copied them out by hand, much as Erasmus claimed to have done whilst a young canon at Steyn.<sup>746</sup> From the drawn-out collapse of the Antique world to Erasmus' lifetime, Christian scholars throughout Europe saw in Jerome a compelling example of Christian learning and piety, such that in writings ranging from one of the earliest biographies of Jerome<sup>747</sup> to the letters of early modern humanists, Christians referred to Jerome as *Hieronymus noster* – 'our Jerome'.<sup>748</sup>

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<sup>742</sup> J. P. Migne, *Ordres Religieux*, 611. See pages 568-615 for detailed information about the wide variety of orders inspired by Jerome that sprang up throughout Mediaeval and Early Modern Europe.

<sup>743</sup> See Jean Besse's entry, 'Hieronymites', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 7 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910). Accessed 28 January 2013 at New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07345a.htm>

<sup>744</sup> See Barry Collett, *Italian Benedictine Scholars and the Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 1-76.

<sup>745</sup> Stinger, *Humanism*, 123.

<sup>746</sup> Allen 22, 18-26. See also CWE 61, xxxiv.

<sup>747</sup> See BHL 3865cm; 3865f. This biography, taken from the *Chronicle of Marcellinus*, begins with the words *Hieronymus Noster*.

<sup>748</sup> See Irena Backus, 'Erasmus and the Spirituality of the Early Church', in *Erasmus' Vision of the Church*, ed. Hilmar Pabel (Kirkville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1995), 114. See also Silvia Rizzo, *Il Lessico filologico degli umanisti* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1973), 23. Rizzo cites an example in which Traversari writes of works translated by 'our Jerome': ...volumina quae ex Galliis secum adduxerat, nova

Such admiration of Jerome inspired concern for the faithful transmission of his letters and of his other works that was not limited to humanist scholars. To say nothing of his efforts to edit Augustine, Ambrose and other great churchmen, as early as the ninth century Lupus of Ferrières (ca. 805-861), an exceptional scholar working mostly out of Fulda, undertook to correct and to comment on Jerome's translation of the *Chronicle of Eusebius* in a manuscript now at Berlin's State Library.<sup>749</sup> Later in the Mediaeval period many scholars and scribes tried to correct and to comment on Jerome's letters and clearly understood problems inherent in preserving Jerome's letters and other writings for later generations.<sup>750</sup> For example, Guigues du Châtel (1083-1137), fifth prior of the Grand Chartreuse, was aware that many letters had been falsely attributed to Jerome.<sup>751</sup> In order to put together a new collection of Jerome's letters, Guigues employed many of his subordinates at the Chartreuse and tried 'to seek out manuscripts diligently, to purge them of their errors and to re-copy them'.<sup>752</sup> In his analysis of spurious letters for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* Erasmus followed, wittingly or not, many of the arguments that Guigues made in one of his letters to the Chartreux of Durbon.<sup>753</sup> In his *Hieronymianus*, which by the fourteenth century's latter half was widely available and had helped to encourage the representation of Jerome as a cardinal in contemporary plastic arts,<sup>754</sup> Giovanni Andrea (c.1270-1335) remarked that Gratian, in his monumental *Decretum*,

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Irenei contra haereses in papyro epistolasque Theophili de Pascha contra Origenem a Hieronymo nostro traductas in membranis...

<sup>749</sup> Alberto Ricciardi, *L'Epistolario di Lupo di Ferrières* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'Alto Medioevo, 2005), 56-57. The manuscript in question is MS 126.

<sup>750</sup> See Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 33. See Dill I, 28.

<sup>751</sup> For a life of Guigues see *Lettres des premiers Chartreux*, volume 1, 97-101. See Clausi and Vincenza Milazzo, 'Una storia (non) tutta Romana: L'Editio Princeps delle Epistolae di Gerolamo', in *Editiones Principes delle Opere dei Padri Greci e Latini*, ed. Mariarosa Cortesi (Florence: SISMEL, 2006), 57-66. See page 65 where Clausi cites what Giovanni d'Andrea wrote about Guy of Châtel. See *Histoire littéraire de la France: XIIIème siècle* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1835), 640-643.

<sup>752</sup> For the above citation see *Lettres des Premiers Chartreux*, volume 1, 99.

<sup>753</sup> See Guigues' letter to the Chartreux of Durbon in *Lettres des Premiers Chartreux*, volume 1, 214. See pages 214-219 and footnotes 1-7.

<sup>754</sup> Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 67-71.

had wrongly ascribed several letters to Jerome.<sup>755</sup> Concerns about textual corruption and false attribution only grew among early humanists.

Scholars now widely agree with Eugene Rice that the re-discovery of the Classical past so important to Renaissance humanists was closely tied with their re-discovery of Christian Antiquity that was at least equally enthusiastic.<sup>756</sup> We see such shared enthusiasm for the Classics and for the Church Fathers in the efforts of Giovanni Andrea Bussi (1417-1475), Bishop of Aleria and first librarian of the Vatican Library, to edit over twenty-four editions for the Roman printing-press of Conrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz in 1468-1472.<sup>757</sup> The first edition that Sweynheim and Pannartz printed at Rome, among the first books printed in the city, was the 1467 edition of Cicero's letters. One of the first printed editions of Jerome's letters soon followed.<sup>758</sup> For humanists as alike and as different as Coluccio Salutati, Bussi, Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus, the Church Fathers were even given pride of place in the Classical canon since they were exemplary Christians as well as great stylists and thinkers.<sup>759</sup> Erasmus expressed this idea pithily in his *Life of Jerome*: 'Cicero speaks; Jerome thunders and fulminates. We admire the former's language, but we admire the latter's heart as well.'<sup>760</sup> The abiding concern for the accurate transmission and correction of ancient texts born in part from such enthusiasm only grew as the new art of printing spread

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<sup>755</sup> See Clausi, 'Una storia (non) tutta Romana', 62-66. On page 64 Clausi cites Andrea's observations about Gratian: Quia vero de praedictis Hieronymi scriptis ultra ducenta capitula in volumine decretorum fuere transcripta, quae sunt illa in fine subiungam. Et licet (ut ibi patebit) Gratianus interdum attribuat Hieronymo scripta quae transtulit, ego tamen librorum translatorum per ipsum notabilia hic non ponam. Aliorum enim non sua sunt verba translata.

<sup>756</sup> See Dill I, 27-28. Eugene Rice, 'The Renaissance Idea of Christian Antiquity', 17-28.

<sup>757</sup> For the most thorough biography of Bussi see See *Prefazioni*, xxxix-liii. See also Martin Lowry, *World of Aldus Manutius* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 25-26.

<sup>758</sup> This Cicero edition was their 1467 edition of his *Epistolae ad Familiares*. It was soon followed by one of the first printed editions of Jerome's letters (1468-1469), at which we shall be looking closely later in this thesis. See John Lawrence Sharpe III, 'A bibliographical essay', in *A Leaf from the Letters of Saint Jerome*, 15.

<sup>759</sup> For Valla, see Cristopher Celenza, 'Lorenzo Valla's Radical Philology: The Preface to the *Annotations to the New Testament* in Context', in *The Journal of Mediaeval and Early Modern Studies* 42:2 (Spring 2012): 365-394. For Salutati see Charles Henderson and Berthold Louis Ullman, eds. *Classical, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in Honour of Berthold Louis Ullman* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1964), 95; 218.

<sup>760</sup> VH 1443-1445: Loquitur Cicero; tonat ac fulminat Hieronymus: illius linguam miramur, huius etiam pectus.

and gained sway. Before 1516 at least twenty-one editions of Jerome's letters had been printed, to say nothing of printed countless works including some of his letters, such as small selections or early Latin Bibles, to which several of Jerome's letters were often attached as a foreword.<sup>761</sup>

In their work for the Toronto *Edition of Saint Jerome*, Brady and Olin point out that although 'Erasmus complained frequently and vigorously about the corruption and neglect of Jerome's writings and about the great difficulty in restoring them...we have [few] details about his working methods or the actual circumstances of his editorial labours'.<sup>762</sup> Given this lack of knowledge about Erasmus' editorial work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, Clausi is right to remark that 'it is not enough...abstractly to affirm' its superiority.<sup>763</sup> In the second part of this thesis, therefore, we shall look more closely at the Froben editors' claim to have brought Jerome back from worm-ridden oblivion by looking at many editions of Jerome's letters that came before 1516. From comparing it with other prior printed editions of Jerome's letters, we shall see that for all its outstanding achievements, the 1516 Jerome *Edition* did not mark as radical a departure from the prior printed tradition as its editors would have their readers, both past and present, believe.

In July 1515 Erasmus left Basel and the Froben presses, then busy at work printing the *Edition*, in order to spend several months in England. He went back to England in part in order to continue work on the 1516 Froben *New Testament* and on the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, possibly with sources that he had left there in 1514.<sup>764</sup> About this time, in a small edition including letters by others addressed to Leo X, Froben published three powerful letters that

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<sup>761</sup> ASD IX-2, 222, note 938. See AK 451.

<sup>762</sup> CWE 61, xxi.

<sup>763</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 152.

<sup>764</sup> Dill I, 192-196.

Erasmus addressed to Roman churchmen of the highest rank. According to Alexandre Vanautgaerden, these letters made for ‘a true press campaign’, and in the remainder of this thesis I shall refer to these three letters as the ‘press campaign’ letters.<sup>765</sup> In them Erasmus outlined his views about the prior transmission of Jerome’s letters and presented what he believed to be the 1516 *Edition*’s most outstanding achievements. In his letter to the Cardinal Raffaele Riario, Erasmus made what Pabel has called the utterly ‘astounding’ claim that the 1516 *Edition* might be considered an *editio princeps* of Jerome’s letters, even though they had already been in print for almost fifty years since Sweynheim and Pannartz and another Roman printer, Sixtus Riessinger, published two separate versions in 1468.<sup>766</sup> Erasmus wrote these words about the 1516 *Edition* to the Roman prince of the Church and noted patron of the arts:

Saint Jerome has been at press for some time now in his entirety, or rather he is being born again: for before this he was so much corrupted and mutilated that one might think he was now not so much revised as published for the first time. The text has been emended with incalculable labour and the comparison of many copies, and those of great antiquity; notes have been added in their places to make him easier to read without stumbling. You know that there are inserted here and there in Jerome passages so obscure that they bring the reader to a stop. Greek and Hebrew words I have either restored or corrected. Spurious works and those falsely ascribed, some mixed in by chance and others by some impostor, I have not cut out, but have banished to a volume on their own, that a reader whose appetite is stronger than his standards of taste might find nothing wanting, and yet the worthless productions of some witless non-entity might no longer flaunt the name of such an admirable author.<sup>767</sup>

Erasmus then made the bold claim that he never would take back: ‘I doubt if Jerome himself expended so much effort on the writing of his works as they will cost me in the correction. At least I have thrown myself into this task so zealously that one could almost say that I had

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<sup>765</sup> See Alexandre Vanautgaerden, *Érasme typographe* (Bruxelles: Académie royale de Belgique; Genève, Librairie Droz, 2012), 319; 364.

<sup>766</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 60.

<sup>767</sup> Allen 333, 64-75: Excuditur iam dudum divus Hieronymus totus, imo renascitur, antehac adeo depravatus ac mutilus ut nunc non tam restitutus quam primum aeditus videri possit. Hunc non aestimandis sudoribus, multis collatis exemplaribus iisque pervetustis emendavimus, adiectis in loco scholiis, quo possit inoffensus legi. Scis enim apud hunc passim infulciri quae lectorem obscuritate remorentur. Graeca atque Hebraica vel reposuimus vel correximus. Notos ac supposititios libros, quorum alios casus, alios imposter aliquis admiscuerat, non amputavimus quidem sed in suum reiecimus tomum, neve quid desiderare possit lector avidior quam elegantior, neve insulsissimi blateronis nugae tam excellentis viri titulo diutius sese venditarent.

worked myself to death that Jerome might live again.’<sup>768</sup> Lest we think this claim unique, we see it repeated in different words in his letter to Cardinal Domenico Grimani, one of Erasmus’ patrons at Rome.<sup>769</sup> In this letter Erasmus also pointed out that he and the Froben editors worked both ‘with the aid of old exemplars’ (*ope codicum*) and ‘with [their] own wits’ (*ope ingenii*) in order to remove ‘the errors which more truly buried than disfigured’ Jerome.<sup>770</sup> Erasmus also claimed that the Greek and Hebrew passages in Jerome’s letters ‘were either lacking altogether or added in such a form that it would have been better to have added nothing’, adding that he and the Froben editors had restored them ‘with the greatest care.’<sup>771</sup>

In this letter and in his ‘press campaign’ letter to Leo X, Erasmus repeated his claim that he and the Froben editors had spent more time and money to restore Jerome than Jerome himself had spent writing his many letters, polemical tracts and commentaries on the Bible.<sup>772</sup> Such claims about the total corruption of Jerome’s letters, which resembled the complaints that many prior humanist editors such as Coluccio Salutati made about other ancient texts,<sup>773</sup> do not ring entirely true when we consider the young Erasmus’ enthusiasm for Jerome’s elegance, one that Valla and many other humanists shared before the 1516 *Edition*’s appearance.<sup>774</sup> How likely contemporary readers would have been to accept Erasmus’ claims in the 1515 press campaign is unclear, but the 1516 *Edition* did arouse quite a buzz before its

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<sup>768</sup> Allen 333, 78-81: Nec arbitror ipsi Hieronymo tantidem constitisse suas lucubrationes conditas quanti nobis constabunt restitutae. Ipse certe in hoc negotium tanto incubui studio ut parum abfuerit quin memet labore confecerim, dum operam do ut reviviscat Hieronymus. The translation is from CWE 61, pages 89-90.

<sup>769</sup> Allen 334, 99-104.

<sup>770</sup> I shall outline Rizzo’s description of correction *ope ingenii* and *ope codicum* below in this thesis. For immediate reference see Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 253-257.

<sup>771</sup> See Allen 334, 114-116: Graeca et Hebraica, quae vel deerant prorsus vel sic erant adscripta ut praestiterit nihil adscriptum fuisse, summa cura restituimus.

<sup>772</sup> Allen 334, 107-110.

<sup>773</sup> See Coluccio Salutati, *De fato et fortuna*, ed. Concetta Bianca (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1985), 48; 58-66 (*De fato et fortuna* 2, 6).

<sup>774</sup> See, for instance, Allen 22, 18-20. For Valla’s admiration and implied criticism of Jerome see Cristopher Celenza, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Radical Philology’, 365-394.



publication. Early in 1516 Thomas More wrote to Erasmus, his long-time friend: 'I am delighted that Jerome and the New Testament make such good progress. It is remarkable how keenly they are awaited by everyone on all sides.'<sup>775</sup> Once made available at the Frankfurt book fair in autumn 1516, many high-ranking churchmen and laymen enthusiastically welcomed the *Edition*, and readers from all over Europe wrote letters to Erasmus praising his work and thanking him for his 'restoration' of Jerome.<sup>776</sup>

The 1516 *Edition* did not, however, lack its contemporary critics. One of these was the English Franciscan Henry Standish, whom Erasmus mocked in an unusually long *scholion* to Jerome's letter *Frater Ambrosius*.<sup>777</sup> Soon the English cleric Edward Lee took Erasmus to task for this mockery as well as for his editorial work for the 1516 *Edition*. In a letter to Martin Lipsius dated 7 May 1518, Erasmus quoted Lee's remarks:

...he [Erasmus] is wrong in thus attacking this Franciscan. It is men greedy for position or reputation, hungry for coin, empty-headed, full of words and wind, who see to it that our text of Jerome should be thus mutilated and corrupt. If some copies are corrupt through scribal error, let them be corrected against ancient texts (for I reckon some can still be found that were written in Jerome's own day), and let us not have new ones made which destroy the elegance of Jerome and his eloquence and meaning.<sup>778</sup>

We can safely assume that others at the University of Louvain and elsewhere in Christendom shared Lee's opinion about the 1516 *Edition* and its editors and that it was not received with enthusiasm in all quarters. On the other side of the coming religious divide, despite his early enthusiasm for it, Martin Luther expressed increasing dissatisfaction with the *Edition* as he

<sup>775</sup> Allen 388, 162-163: Gaudeo Hieronymum ac Novum Testamentum tam bene procedere. Mirum est quanto undique desiderio expectantur ab omnibus.

<sup>776</sup> See Dill I, 291-294. See Allen 340 (from Cardinal Riario), 38-41.

<sup>777</sup> See Appendix LIII-LIV for the *scholion* to Jerome's Letter *Frater Ambrosius* beginning *Captus a piratis*.

<sup>778</sup> Allen 843, 551-558: 'Possem', inquit, 'et illud addere, quod male contra hunc Franciscanum movetur. Nam iam aut honoris aut famae cupidi, pecunia egentes, vacui, verbosi, inflati agunt ut Hieronymum sic mutilum, sic depravatum habeamus. Si nonnulli libri scriptorum vitio depravati sunt, corrigantur iuxta antiqua exemplaria – estimo adhuc inveniri posse tempore Hieronymi scripta – non cudantur nova, elegantiam autem, eloquentiam ac sensum Hieronymum destruentia'. The translation is from CWE 6, pages 22-23. I owe this quote to Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 70-71. For more detail on critics of the 1516 *Edition* see Dill I, 295-305.

worked with and heavily annotated his own copy.<sup>779</sup> In summer 1516 Erasmus remarked to his friend and correspondent Guillaume Budé that his many engagements for the Froben press at this time were ‘such great tasks that the resulting unpopularity in certain quarters is almost insupportable’.<sup>780</sup> Such criticism aside, the *Edition* was widely popular among contemporary humanists, and we cannot attribute the Archbishop of Canterbury’s praise of Erasmus’ work solely to the fulsome introductory letter to the *Edition* that Erasmus addressed to him. After assuring Erasmus that his ‘brother bishops’ and other ‘doctors of divinity’ strongly approved Erasmus’ work on the Froben *New Testament*, Warham wrote: ‘...I count your book worthy of all praise, and so too the work on Jerome, which you are in a fair way to accomplish shortly. These works will secure you immortal fame among mankind, a divine reward in Heaven, and from me whatever I can conveniently provide. I received the volumes of your Jerome, which cannot be too highly praised...I owe you undying gratitude, bearing in mind your sweat and toil on these publications.’<sup>781</sup>

Before moving forward to examine the 1516 Jerome *Edition* and its printed forebears in greater detail, I would like to sum up Erasmus’ claims about its achievements. Firstly, he claimed time and again that Jerome had been all but totally corrupted over centuries of transmission, such that he could hardly be read and understood even by the most learned. Second, he claimed that he and the Froben editors had corrected the text of Jerome’s letters by comparing its exemplars (*ope codicum*), some of these very old, and by making prudent

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<sup>779</sup> See Martin Brecht and Christian Peters, eds. *Annotierungen zu den Werken des Hieronymus* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2000), 1-15.

<sup>780</sup> Allen 421, 113-114: Haec adeo magna sunt ut ob quorundam invidiam vix subsistam.

<sup>781</sup> Allen 425, 21-32: Editionem tuam in Novum Testamentum aliquot fratribus meis episcopis et theologiae doctoribus communicavi, qui maxime operae pretium in ea re te fecisse uno ore profitentur...eam omnibus laudibus effero, proinde ut Hieronymianam provinciam, quam in eo es ut propediem absolvas: per quae opera famam immortalem inter homines, inter superos divinam remunerationem et a me quicquid commode et convenienter praestare potero, consequeris. Hieronymi volumina nunquam satis laudata a praesentium latore accepi; pro quibus et Novo Testamento, quod etiam abs te accepi, gratias habeo immortales, hoc est pro sudoribus quos in iis operibus exantlasti.

conjectural emendations when necessary (*ope ingenii*). Third, he claimed to have added commentaries that would make Jerome, hitherto incomprehensible even to experts, accessible to ‘the modestly learned layman’. What is more, he claimed that these commentaries would keep Jerome from being easily corrupted in the future. Fourth, he claimed that the Froben editors had restored ‘with the greatest care’ badly corrupted Greek and Hebrew passages in Jerome’s letters and commentaries. Fifth, he claimed to have separated the wheat of the true Jerome from the tares of works wrongly ascribed to him. To Erasmus’ mind, it was above all for these reasons that the 1516 *Edition* was an achievement remarkable enough to be ranked with the ‘labours of Hercules’.<sup>782</sup> Writing for the wide audience of the contemporary republic of letters and paving the way for the *Edition*’s presentation at Frankfurt’s 1516 autumn book fair, Erasmus proclaimed the hope that his own labours and those of other Froben editors would help to usher in the ‘re-birth’ of a very popular Church Father whose works Christians had read, admired, venerated and transmitted since Jerome’s death about 420 AD.

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<sup>782</sup> See Allen 334, 120-130.

## PART II: CHAPTER VIII

### *EX ITALIA LUX –* TEXTUAL CRITICISM IN CONTEXT

‘Far and wide, everywhere, everything is corrupted!’<sup>783</sup> With these world-weary words worthy of the Preacher, Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), described the state of the texts of Seneca’s *Epistolae Morales* (letters to Lucilius) and of Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* (*City of God*) that had fallen into his hands.<sup>784</sup> Salutati was a disciple of and heir to Petrarch, patron of great humanists such as Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444) and Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), an accomplished collector of books and among contemporary Italian humanism’s standard-bearers until his death.<sup>785</sup> Making the above lament in his work *De fato et fortuna* (*On Fate and Fortune*), in a drawn-out screed against scribes’ corruption of texts, Salutati claimed that owing to their incompetence and impudence, ‘not even one of the moral philosophers, historians or poets has not been left in a most corrupted state’.<sup>786</sup> Even in Erasmus’ many laments about the corruption of ancient pagan and Patristic texts, it is hard to find an attack so forceful as Salutati’s decrying what he believed to be the careless, impious and destructive efforts of scribes throughout all the ages since Antiquity who had done violence and outrage to the texts of the great authors:

Many have approached these works of literature...who, whilst thundering from their pulpits of ignorance, making use of their inept wit, see to it every day that books are not corrupted, but erased, not

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<sup>783</sup> See Coluccio Salutati, *De fato et fortuna*, 48, lines 58-66 (*De fato et fortuna* 2, 6): Non enim illi versiculi solum tam varie diversis exemplati codicibus nostram et auctorum iniuriam habent, late siquidem et ubique corrupta sunt omnia...

<sup>784</sup> For an overview of Salutati’s scholarly activities see *Scribes and Scholars*, 134-136. See Concetta Bianca’s introduction to Salutati in *De fato et fortuna*, vii-lxxix.

<sup>785</sup> See Berthold Louis Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati* (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1963), 117-129.

<sup>786</sup> Salutati, *De fato et fortuna*, 48, lines 64-66: ...nullum omnino textum philosophorum moralium, historicorum vel etiam poetarum non corruptissimum reliquerunt. For the whole text see Salutati, *De fato et fortuna*, pages 46-56.

corrected, which they know not how to do, but corrupted. This is not only a fault of our age, but of almost all those ages coming after the authors themselves, where men, always and with ever-growing ignorance, took books whose authors' authority and fame promised them immortality and set about destroying them with what they called corrections, but which were truly corruptions.<sup>787</sup>

In order to combat these sorry circumstances Salutati thought it desirable for the public good that all known copies of worthy ancient texts be put in a library for review and comparison by 'most learned men who would edit the books with diligent collation and know how to remove the disagreement of all the current versions by sound judgement of the meaning of words'.<sup>788</sup> Salutati did not get his hopes up high, however, that public-spirited princes and administrators would fulfil their rightful obligations to the humanities. He believed that his contemporaries were 'inclined to nothing less than to the study of letters' since such studies turned meagre profits and he complained that moneyed interests in his day would not adequately support studies of the humanities because such studies brought in little immediate gain. 'These things can be lamented', remarked Salutati, 'but not made better'.<sup>789</sup>

More than a century later, another editor of Augustine, Erasmus, expressed the same thoughts in his foreword to the 1529 Froben edition of Augustine's works, calling for the

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<sup>787</sup> Salutati, *De fato et fortuna*, 49, lines 90-100: Accedunt ad haec litteratorum plurimi, de quorum oribus simplices adolescentuli pendent in scholis, qui de suis ignorantiae cathedris intonantes, quotidie libros, dum suis, ineptis licet, sensibus serviunt, iubent non corrigi, sed abradi, non emendari, quod facere nesciunt, sed corrumpi. Nec id nostrae aetatis solummodo vitium est, sed omnis quae nos praecessit post autores ipsos ferme posteritas, ignorantia semper et sine modo crescente, libros quos autoritas et fama scriptorum perpetuos fore spondebat visa sit ineptis et inconsideratis suis correctionibus, imo corruptionibus abolere...

<sup>788</sup> Salutati, *De fato et fortuna*, 49, lines 100-109: Quod et nos et futuram aetatem perfectum ire video, nisi de publico remedium apponatur, ut, sicut hactenus aliquando factum fuit, constituentur bibliothecae publicae in quas omnium librorum copia congeratur preponanturque viri peritissimi bibliothecis qui libros diligentissima collatione revideant et omnem varietatum discordiam recte diffinitionis iudicio noverint remove. Cui rei maximos quondam viros invenimus fuisse prepositos, qui gloriosissimum reputabant se libris subscribere quos revisissent, sicut in antiquis librorum codicibus est videre.

<sup>789</sup> Salutati, *De fato et fortuna*, 49, lines 113-127: Hoc autem quam sperandum sit, animis ut sunt omnium ad nihil minus quam ad litterarum studia conversis, cuiusvis iudicium sit. Ego quidem omnino non spero nec, si incipiatur, perfici credam graviter, quoniam preponendi tanto muneri sine dubitatione non adsint et si qui forent ab ambitiosis et lucrandi cupidis ipsos non contingeret, sed oporteret excludi. Non enim idoneus iniungendo muneri queritur, sed notus vel dilectus, cui salarium per gratium conferatur: ille dignior est cui qui potest faviet. Sed hec alias: deplorari quidem possunt, non reparari. Nam usque adeo pauci sunt qui studiis humanitatis indulgeant, licet illa commendentur ab omnibus, placeant multis et aliqui delectentur in ipsis, quod rem tam perditae collapsam et in peius continue delabentem erigere prorsus nequeant et quin pereat funditus obviare.

establishment of public libraries in which exemplars of useful and especially of sacred works, ‘corrected as carefully as possibly by learned men’, could be preserved for posterity.<sup>790</sup> Proud heir to Italian humanist scholars and to their accomplishments, Erasmus often took up their thoughts, their principles and even their vocabulary for his many editorial projects, including the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. Among Erasmus’ favourite Italian humanists was Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457). Already as a young monk at Steyn Abbey, Erasmus prized Valla and ranked him at the top of his list of the great Italian humanists who inspired him. In a series of letters to Cornelius Gerard in 1489, Erasmus strongly recommended Valla’s *Elegances of the Latin Language* to his friend and fellow-monk: ‘...you are to learn Valla’s *Elegances* so thoroughly that you become as familiar with them as with your own toes and fingers’.<sup>791</sup> He also expressed to Cornelius his belief then that Valla, along with Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481), had heroically rescued Latin elegance from oblivion.<sup>792</sup> Such enthusiasm extended as well to other fifteenth-century Italian humanists.<sup>793</sup> To use Kenney’s words, Erasmus, ‘when rehearsing (as he more than once does) the muster-roll of the great scholars of Italy – Filelfo, Valla, Pico, Gaza – never fails to single out Poliziano to stand alongside Ermolao Barbaro as representing all that *bonae literae* meant to him’.<sup>794</sup> Notwithstanding his occasional criticism of Valla’s works, such as in the *Life of Jerome* and in his own *Annotations*, Erasmus never

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<sup>790</sup> Compare Salutati’s words in note 6 above with Allen 2157, 387-397: Verum quae vel librariorum incuria vel lectorum inscitia commissa sunt, habent utcunque colorem, quo culpam liceat sin non excusare, certe extenuare: quanquam hanc oportuit esse publicam principum, praesulum et abbatum curam, ut utilium, sed praecipue sacrorum voluminum exemplaria, per eruditos viros quam diligentissime castigata, servarentur in publicis bibliothecis.

<sup>791</sup> Allen 29, 43-44: ...Laurentianas Elegantias sic ediscas, ut eas velut ungues digitosque tuos teneas...

<sup>792</sup> Allen 26, 103-108.

<sup>793</sup> See D’Amico’s summary of the importance of Poliziano and of Barbaro to Erasmus in *Theory and Practice*, 21-27. See also *Scribes and Scholars*, 140-146; 149-154. See E. J. Kenney, *The Classical Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 1-20.

<sup>794</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 5. Kenney cites for his evidence Allen 417, 10-11; Allen 531, 47-48; Allen 1108, 114-115; Allen 1347, 210-213. See, for example, Erasmus’ praise of Barbaro’s editorial work on Pliny in his foreword to the 1525 Froben edition of Pliny’s *Historia Naturalis* in Allen 1544, 38-41. See also Vittore Branca’s chapter in Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, eds. *Storia di Venezia 4* (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1996), 723-755; 731.

lost his lifelong enthusiasm for works of Valla, who to his mind ‘would not have been deemed lacking in eloquence even in the time of Cicero’.<sup>795</sup>

In 1505 Erasmus published the first printed edition of Valla’s *Annotations on the New Testament*, which he discovered at the library of Park Abbey near Louvain.<sup>796</sup> Having read this work, at once Erasmus was ‘eager to share it with the world of scholarship, for it seemed to me ungenerous to devour the prize of my chase in solitude and silence’.<sup>797</sup> Erasmus saw and presented his textual editing and criticism for the 1516 Froben *New Testament* as a continuation of Valla’s work.<sup>798</sup> To use Christopher Celenza’s words, Erasmus, ‘adopting as he did almost all of Valla’s points and successively adding to them in his own ever-expanding list of Biblical annotations...thus served as a mediator for Valla’s work in the theological debates of the sixteenth century’.<sup>799</sup> Such adoption of Valla’s scholarship is clear in one relatively well-known example from the 1516 *New Testament*, in which Erasmus’ suggestion to change the translation of the Greek word *metanoete* (μετανοεῖτε) from the third chapter of Matthew from ‘do penance’ (*poenitentiam agite*) to ‘repent’ (*poenitemini*) came from Valla’s commentaries on this same passage.<sup>800</sup> In this example we also see one of the

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<sup>795</sup> VH 1385-1388: Et tamen eximios viros nostra vidit aetas, et qui ne Ciceronis quidem saeculo inter elingues habiti fuissent, quorum praecipui sunt Laurentius Valla, Hermolaus Barbarus, Angelus Politianus, Ioannes Picus, et noster Rodolphus Agricola.

<sup>796</sup> For the best summary of the manuscript tradition of Valla’s *Collatio Novi Testamenti*, see Alessandro Perosa’s introduction to Lorenzo Valla, *Collatio Novi Testamenti*, ed. Alessandro Perosa (Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1970), ix-lvii.

<sup>797</sup> Allen 182, 1-6: Aestate superiore, cum in pervetusta quapiam bibliotheca venarer (nullis enim in saltibus venatus iucundior), forte in casses meos incidit praeda neitquam vulgaris, Laurentii Vallae in Novum Testamentum annotationes. Hanc equidem ilico magnopere volebam studiosis omnibus impertire; videlicet ingenerosum esse ratus, quod venando nactus essem, id solum me ac tacitum devorare.

<sup>798</sup> See Allen 337, 835-874. See also the *Apology* to the *New Testament* (pages not marked, found at beginning of 1516 Froben *New Testament*): Verum ut aliquando finiam, quemadmodum ingenue fateor esse permulta, quae doctius tractari potuissent, ut non inficias eo, locis aliquot dormitasse lassum, ita res ipsa, ni fallor, indicabit, me post Laurentium Vallam, cui non hac tantum in parte debent bonae litterae, post Iacobum Fabrum, virtutis omnis et literarum antistitem, nec sine causa versatum in hoc negotio, nec sine fructu.

<sup>799</sup> Cristopher Celenza, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Radical Philology’, 367.

<sup>800</sup> 1526 *Annotationes*, page 13 (Matthew 3): Venit Ioannes Baptistae, praedicans in deserto Iudaeae, et dicens: Poenitentiam agite, appropinquabit enim regnum coelorum.) Venit, temporis est praesentis. Et appropinquavit

important principles of textual criticism that Erasmus shared with Valla and which he proclaimed in his 1505 edition of Valla's *Annotations to the New Testament*<sup>801</sup> and repeated for much of his remaining career: the willingness to change texts, even sacred texts, if he believed them to be wrong.<sup>802</sup> To be willing to change hallowed texts and even Scripture may have been the rule among contemporary humanist scholars, but it was hardly an exception. According to Kenney, 'Italian humanists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries' were so willing to change texts based on their own conjectures and sense of style that they 'may well have inflicted more damage on Classical texts by their efforts at correction than they removed'. Nonetheless, with rare exceptions such as Petrarch, Kenney believes that these scholars' efforts were 'unsystematic' and, since they 'did not control their sources', were 'essentially anti-philological'.<sup>803</sup> While we can find noteworthy exceptions to Kenney's generalizations, he is right to point out that many humanist editors in this period simply changed texts, based on a variety of grounds, without advertising or explaining their changes to readers. What is important about Valla's commentaries is that he took the trouble to explain to readers his proposed changes to the text, often in a careful way. In their work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, Erasmus and the Froben editors did the same in their commentaries and repeated on many occasions that they had added *scholia* to the text of Jerome's letters so 'that it may not be so easy in future for anyone to corrupt what other men have restored'.<sup>804</sup> We shall see below that notwithstanding Erasmus' detailed commentary in the *scholia*, many

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legendum est, non appropinquabit. Quod nunc ait, poenitentiam agite, alibi Graeco respondere volens, ait, poenitemini *μετανοεῖτε*, Poenitemini et credite Evangelio. Compare with Erasmus' 1516 *Annotationes*, f. 77.

<sup>801</sup> Allen 182, 158-162: At fas non est, inquit, in sacris scripturis quicquam immutare, propterea quod illic ne apiculi quidem mysterio vacant. Immo tanto magis nefas est depravare, tantoque attentius corrigendum a doctis quod per inscitiam est adulteratum; ea tamen cautione temperantiaque, quae cum omnibus libris tum sacris in primis debetur.

<sup>802</sup> See 1516 *Annotationes*, ff. 97-103 (Luke 1). Valla writes in the 1526 *Annotationes*, pages 98-99: Nescio an aucupandae veritatis gratia, an per imprudentiam interpretes ita faciat, ut partem transferat, partem in graecanica forma relinquat. See Allen 182, 144-157. See also Allen 182, 158-162.

<sup>803</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 3.

<sup>804</sup> Allen 396, 289-293: ...id scholiis additis illustravimus quae geminam utilitatem adferant: alteram quod tam insignis author, qui antehac nec ab eruditissimis legi poterat, posthac a semidoctis poterit intelligi; alteram quod iam non perinde proclive fuerit cuivis depravare quod ab aliis est restitutum.



changes which Erasmus and the Froben editors made to Jerome's letters still went unmarked and unexplained. But the principle was there – important changes to the text now called for scholarly discussion and justification.

Erasmus and Valla both believed that to correct corrupted sacred texts was an act of piety. About 1450, when defending himself against Poggio Bracciolini's accusations that his proposing corrections to Jerome's translation of the New Testament was unspeakably insolent, Valla rejoined: 'So if I am correcting anything, I am not correcting Sacred Scripture, but rather its translation, and in doing so I am not being insolent toward Scripture but rather pious.'<sup>805</sup> Erasmus echoed these words in his introductory letter to Valla's *Annotations* in 1505: 'But, it will be said, it is sinful to change anything in Holy Scriptures; for no jot and tittle therein is without some special import. On the contrary: the sin of corruption is greater, and the need for careful revision by scholars greater also, where the source of corruption was ignorance.'<sup>806</sup> For Erasmus, such corruption had serious practical consequences for the Christian faithful, and in a 1516 letter to Henry Bullock he mocked obscurantism and hard-headed clinging to a faulted textual tradition in the example of the 'mass-priest who refused to change the word *mumpsimus* which he had used for twenty years, when someone told him that *sumpsimus* was what he ought to say'.<sup>807</sup> In this episode, in which Erasmus referred to an English priest's mistaken reading of the post-communion prayers in the Roman liturgy, he helped to bring into the English language the word *mumpsimus*, which the *Oxford English*

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<sup>805</sup> I owe this quote to Cristopher Celenza, 'Lorenzo Valla's Radical Philology', 365. Celenza cites Lorenzo Valla, *Antidotum Primum: La prima apologia contro Poggio Bracciolini*, ed. Ari Wesseling (Assen, Germany: Van Gorcum, 1978), 112: Itaque, ne multus sim, siquid emendo non sacram scripturam emendo, sed illius potius interpretationem, neque in eam contumeliosus sum, sed pius potius, nec aliud facio nisi quod melius quam prior interpretes transfero, ut mea tralatio, si vera fuerit, sit appellanda Sancta Scriptura, non illius.

<sup>806</sup> Allen 182, 158-162: At fas non est, inquiunt, in sacris scripturis quicquam immutare, propterea quod illic ne apiculi quidem mysterio vacant. Immo tanto magis nefas est depravare, tantoque attentius corrigendum a doctis quod per inscitiam est adulteratum...

<sup>807</sup> See Allen 456, 72-75: An hic sacrificum illum malint imitari, qui suum 'mumpsimus', quo fuerat viginti usus annos, mutare noluit, admonitus a quopiam 'sumpsimus' esse legendum? For the most detailed treatment of this passage and its implications, see the chapter entitled 'Mumpsimus and Sumpsimus' in Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 157-168.

*Dictionary* now defines as ‘a person who obstinately adheres to old ways in spite of clear evidence that they are wrong’ or ‘an ignorant and bigoted opponent of reform’.<sup>808</sup> Later in this thesis we shall see many examples in which Johannes Amerbach and others working for him and for his heirs both before and after Erasmus’ arrival at Basel shared and spread the idea that to establish correct Patristic and Biblical texts was important and much-needed work of Christian piety.

For Erasmus as well as for Valla, in order to correct texts one first had to be able to understand and to identify sources of textual corruption. There is now an enormous literature in many languages on these two scholars’ textual criticism,<sup>809</sup> and for our purposes it will be enough to understand that Valla had clearly identified the five major sources of corruption which Reynolds and Wilson point out in *Scribes and Scholars*: ‘mistakes induced by any feature of Ancient or Mediaeval handwriting’, ‘mistakes due to changes in spelling and pronunciation’, omissions, additions and errors of transposition.<sup>810</sup> Linde has shown convincingly that Valla was ‘already aware of and corrected almost every category of corruption’ thus listed five centuries later.<sup>811</sup> For Linde, Valla’s ‘explanations and conjectures show that his work as a textual critic did not rest solely on his brilliance and unparalleled familiarity with classical Latin, but was also firmly based on a precise knowledge of palaeography and the origin of scribal errors’.<sup>812</sup> He had, moreover, developed a method of correction that combined conjecture and collation and had ‘established a highly developed set of theoretical principles about how errors came about, which remain valid in modern

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<sup>808</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word *mumpsimus* came into the English language within Erasmus’ lifetime, as early as 1530.

<sup>809</sup> To begin with, see the entries on Erasmus and on Valla in *The Classical Tradition*, eds. Anthony Grafton, Glen Most, Salvatore Settis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). See pages 327-330 for Erasmus and pages 959-960 for Valla.

<sup>810</sup> See *Scribes and Scholars*, 222-225. For a good summary of these categories and corruption, see Cornelia Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s textual criticism of Livy’, in *Neulateinisches Jahrbuch* 12 (2010): 195-201.

<sup>811</sup> Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s textual criticism’, 219.

<sup>812</sup> Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s textual criticism’, 201.

times'.<sup>813</sup> In further investigation, she concludes that Valla 'applied the same stylistic criteria to the New Testament as to Classical texts'.<sup>814</sup> Almost sixty years after Valla's death, in his introductory letter to the 1516 Jerome *Edition* addressed to William Warham, Erasmus succinctly summarized the common sources of corruption listed above in powerful polemical language:

A good part of all he [Jerome] wrote has perished. What survives was not so much corrupted as virtually destroyed and defaced, and this partly by the fault of illiterate scribes whose habit it is to copy an accurate text inaccurately and make a faulty text worse, to leave out what they cannot read and to corrupt what they do not understand – for instance, the Hebrew and Greek words which Jerome often brings in; but in a much more criminal fashion by sacrilegious men, I know not whom, who have deliberately cut down very many passages, added some, altered many, corrupted, adulterated and muddled almost everything, so that there is hardly a paragraph which an educated man can read without stumbling. What is more...they have mixed their own rubbish into his expositions in such a way that no one can separate them.<sup>815</sup>

In his introductory letter to the *Edition*, to say nothing of many other examples in his *scholia* and in his other works,<sup>816</sup> Erasmus announced, defended and developed ideas about the corruption of sacred and profane texts that mirrored the principles which Linde summarized in her article on Valla's textual scholarship. Both humanist scholars understood that in a variety of ways and with the best of intentions, scribes and would-be correctors could, 'while trying to cure a slight wound', instead inflict 'one that is incurable'.<sup>817</sup> Later in this thesis we shall see similar awareness in scholars ranging from Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494) to

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<sup>813</sup> Linde, 'Lorenzo Valla's textual criticism', 219-223.

<sup>814</sup> Linde, 'Lorenzo Valla's Textual Criticism', 217.

<sup>815</sup> Allen 396, 143-156: Quod superest non depravatum erat, sed prorsus extinctum et oblitteratum; idque partim quidem illiteratorum vitio scribarum, qui solent ex emendatis inemendata describere, ex mendosis mendosiora reddere, praetermittere quod non legunt, corrumpere quod non intelligunt, velut Hebraea Graecaque vocabula quae frequenter intermiscet Hieronymus; sed multo sceleratius a sacrilegis haud scio quibus studio detruncata permulta, addita nonnulla, mutata plaeraque, depravata, sordidata, confusa paene omnia, ut vix ulla sit periodus quam eruditus inoffense possit legere. Immo quod est pestilentissimum vitiandi genus, perinde quasi parum esset tot insulsissimas nugae iuxta infantes atque ineruditas in hominis eloquentissimi pariter ac doctissimi nomen ac titulum contulisse, mediis illius commentariis passim admiscuerunt suas naenias ne quis repurgare posset.

<sup>816</sup> See Allen 396, 187-194; 243-251.

<sup>817</sup> Allen 396, 191-194: Rursum alius forte deprehendens corruptam esse scripturam, dum ex levi coniectura nititur emendare, pro unico mendo geminum inducit et, dum vulnuscule mederi studet, vulnus infligit immedicabile.

Erasmus' colleague and editor Beatus Rhenanus (1485-1547),<sup>818</sup> from Italian monks working in 1490s Venice to German monks in 1510s Alsace – all of whom showed awareness of common sources of textual corruption and tried to correct texts with them in mind.<sup>819</sup>

In the undertaking to establish better texts, humanists such as Valla and Erasmus used much of the same vocabulary in order to describe both textual corruption and their efforts to correct it. For the purposes of this chapter, I shall only cite examples of the vocabulary of textual corruption that humanist scholars shared. Silvia Rizzo's masterly summary of Italian humanists' philological vocabulary remains the starting point for any investigation in this field. She cites numerous and varied examples in which humanist scholars, in order to refer to a textual corruption or to a 'mistake' in the text, used, among others, the nouns *error*, *erratum*, *mendum*, *vitium*, *corruptio*, *depravatio*, *depravatum*, *lapsus*, *incorrectio* and *mendositas*.<sup>820</sup> For Rizzo, among the 'rich range of adjectives' that humanists used in order to identify textual corruption, 'the most used were *corruptus*, *depravatus* and *mendosus*', and other similar adjectives include *incorrectus*, *inemendatus*, *vitiatus* and *inversus*.<sup>821</sup> In Valla's forewords to his *Annotations to the New Testament*, which Celenza has recently translated into English, he used the nouns *error*, *vitium* and *corruptio* each twice. In these same short introductions, in order to refer to corrupted texts Valla used the adjective *depravatus* once and *mendosus* on repeated occasions. That Erasmus took up such humanist vocabulary is clear from the most cursory examination of his textual criticism. From looking only at the *scholia* for twenty-nine letters from the *Edition* that I have included in the appendix to this thesis, in order to describe a faulted text Erasmus used the word *mendosus* at least twelve times, the adjective *depravatus* and its corresponding verb *depravare* at least twenty-five

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<sup>818</sup> For an introduction to Beatus' textual criticism, see John D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 71-109.

<sup>819</sup> For much more detailed treatment of 'humanist theories of textual corruption' see Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 226-235.

<sup>820</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 219-221.

<sup>821</sup> For more examples of such adjectives see Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 221-226.

times and the adjective *corruptus* at least four times. Erasmus' introductory letter to the 1516 Jerome *Edition* shows similar evidence. In order to describe the corruption of Jerome's works, in this one letter Erasmus used the adjective *depravatus* at least nine times, *mendosus* three times, *corruptus* twice and the adjectives *inemendatus* and *vitiatus* each once. He also used the noun *mendum* five times and the nouns *vitium* and *error* each once. In the coming chapters we shall see numerous examples in which Erasmus, his colleagues and other contemporary humanist scholars used the same vocabulary to refer to textual correction and corruption that we see in Valla's works and which Rizzo has summarized and identified in the works of many Italian humanists spanning the fifteenth century.

It is now widely recognized that Erasmus took his inspiration for textual critical work from Valla. Not long ago the editors of *The Classical Tradition* claimed that Erasmus, drawing from Valla's example, 'pioneered' the principle of the *difficilior lectio*, which 'directs the editor to prefer the more obscure reading (the *difficilior lectio*) on the grounds that it is less likely to represent a scribal alteration'.<sup>822</sup> I have been unable to find any incontrovertible evidence that Valla showed awareness of this principle in his own textual criticism, but Erasmus knew and used this principle for much of his editorial career. Mostly drawing from Erasmus' commentaries for the 1516 Froben *New Testament*, Jerry Bentley concluded in a 1978 article that Erasmus demonstrated a sound grasp of the 'principle of the harder reading', which many scholars deem one of the great achievements of Renaissance philology and which Bentley called 'one of the most important scholarly canons' in textual criticism.<sup>823</sup> In his longer monograph, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, Bentley remarked:

The principle of the harder reading [*difficilior lectio potior*] is universally recognized by critics as a generally valid guideline of textual analysis, and it still finds its place in the repertoire of modern textual scholars. To Erasmus' credit as a discerning critic, it is now possible to identify him as the first

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<sup>822</sup> See *The Classical Tradition*, 328.

<sup>823</sup> See Jerry Bentley, 'Erasmus, Jean LeClerc and the Principle of the Harder Reading', in *Renaissance Quarterly* 31 (1978): 310.

scholar to develop the principle of the harder reading and to employ it regularly in his criticism of the Greek New Testament.<sup>824</sup>

Jan Krans has expanded upon Bentley's conclusions in his monograph *Beyond What is Written*. He shows that Erasmus applied and used the 'principle of the harder reading' in his New Testament scholarship in what he calls 'an astonishingly "modern" way':

He can explain the origin of variant readings as scribal accommodation and does so repeatedly, though not consistently. Moreover, as the editor of the New Testament text he approaches his task – albeit implicitly – in a historical way, that is, as dealing with the transmission of manuscripts and therefore with unintentional and intentional scribal changes. In this sense his conception of the *lectio difficilior* rule belongs to a vast arsenal of text-critical argumentation, aimed at undoing the damage inflicted by scribes over time.<sup>825</sup>

Krans is right to stress that 'Erasmus did not apply his own 'rules' in a consistent, methodical way'.<sup>826</sup> This does not mean, however, that he did not have 'rules' or at least 'guidelines' that he kept in mind as he undertook textual criticism. Without much reservation we can extend to Erasmus' textual criticism what Linde concluded from her analysis of Valla's:

Anthony Grafton's view that Valla did not have a text-critical method which could be passed on holds true in that he failed to draw up elaborate principles for emending texts. Nevertheless, we should recognize that his emendations were by no means random and that they rested on solid theoretical foundations, at times accompanied by detailed explanations, or even on collation of manuscripts.<sup>827</sup>

In his analysis of Beatus' textual scholarship, John D'Amico concludes that Beatus also seemed to have understood 'the principle of the harder reading'.<sup>828</sup> Later in this thesis we shall be looking in greater detail at work on Beatus' textual criticism by James Hirstein and Pierre Petitmengin, but for now we can point out the improbability that Erasmus' understanding of the 'principle of the harder reading' was unknown to other scholars working

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<sup>824</sup> Jerry Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 154.

<sup>825</sup> Jan Krans, *Beyond What is Written* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 50.

<sup>826</sup> Krans, *Beyond What is Written*, 51.

<sup>827</sup> Linde, 'Lorenzo Valla's Textual Criticism', 222-223.

<sup>828</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 80-81. For an example where Beatus speaks about the confusion of letters see page 89. For more Beatus' critical methods see pages 71-109.

at the Froben press, most of whom had considerable ties and contacts with other humanists in Basel, in Alsace, in Germany and throughout Christendom.

This ‘principle of the harder reading’ was necessarily based on the collation of several different texts. For Valla, the judicious use of manuscripts was an essential part of textual correction, and he was a deft textual critic both with the help of codexes (*ope codicum*) and with the help of wit (*ope ingenii*).<sup>829</sup> Valla has won renown for his ‘ingenious emendations *ope ingenii*’,<sup>830</sup> but Linde’s recent work shows that Valla also undertook significant comparison of manuscripts in his work on Livy, as well as on Quintilian and on the New Testament, proposing many corrections *ope codicum*.<sup>831</sup> Linde concludes that Valla’s textual criticism ‘was a mixture of conjecture and collation’ and that he was ‘convinced that the text could also be improved through collating other codices’.<sup>832</sup> Without definite proof, we should not assume that Valla undertook ‘systematic collation of manuscripts’, but it is clear that he sought them out with zest.<sup>833</sup> In his *Annotations*, Valla often referred to his collation of Latin and of Greek manuscripts,<sup>834</sup> and Bentley remarked that he found ‘not a single example of true conjectural emendation’ in his analysis of Valla’s *Annotations*. ‘At most’, writes Bentley, Valla inferred ‘variant readings in the Greek text by means of peculiar or inaccurate translations in the Vulgate.’<sup>835</sup> In one passage treating Matthew 27, Valla claimed to have on hand three Latin and three Greek manuscripts and to have compared even more in order to try to correct this passage.<sup>836</sup> For a passage from the next chapter, Matthew 28, Valla claimed to

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<sup>829</sup> See Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 270-272.

<sup>830</sup> Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Textual Criticism’, 220.

<sup>831</sup> See Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Textual Criticism’, 208-216. See note 82 on page 208, in which Linde cites a passage from Valla’s *Antidotum in Facium*: Petrarcha addidit *pugnatum est...vos addidistis pugnabimus*.

<sup>832</sup> Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Textual Criticism’, 220.

<sup>833</sup> Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Textual Criticism’, 220.

<sup>834</sup> Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Textual Criticism’, 223.

<sup>835</sup> Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 40.

<sup>836</sup> 1526 *Annotationes*, page 60 (Matthew 27): Quid igitur faciam de Iesu, qui dicitur Christus? Dicunt omnes, ‘Crucifigatur.’) Tres codices latinos, et totidem graecos habeo, cum haec compono, et nonnunquam alios

have consulted and compared no fewer than eight manuscripts,<sup>837</sup> four in each language. Even allowing for exaggeration, it is hard to doubt Valla's wish at least to show readers that he had undertaken careful collation of Latin and Greek manuscripts for his proposed corrections to the sacred text. He clearly believed that careful collation of manuscripts was an important means of bolstering his controversial project to restore Jerome's translation of the New Testament. Erasmus acknowledged Valla's efforts to compare manuscripts in his *Apologia* for the 1516 Froben *New Testament*: 'Lorenzo Valla claimed to have used seven trustworthy (*bonae fidei*) codexes. We used four Greek copies in the first recension, and five in the next. We then looked at most ancient and correct volumes in the Latin language.'<sup>838</sup>

Complain as Erasmus might about their wormholes and how hard they were to read, he and the Froben editors prized and admired manuscripts handed down by Mediaeval scribes.<sup>839</sup> In his publicity efforts for the 1516 *Edition* and throughout their other works, Erasmus and his colleagues at Basel emphasized the use as well as the importance of 'ancient exemplars' (*vetustissimi codices*) that were in many cases clearly manuscripts, even if at times it is unknown as to whether they were designating manuscripts or prior printed editions

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codices consulo, et cum in omnibus graecis legam, dicunt ei omnes, tamen illud ei in nullo latinorum lego, αὐτῷ.

<sup>837</sup> 1526 *Annotationes*, page 73 (Matthew 28): Ex exierunt cito de monumento cum timore, et gaudio currentes nunciare discipulis eius.) Mutatum est verbum in participium et rursus participium in verbum, sed translatio haec ad verbum apertior ac mundior erit, ut verior, sic: Et egressae cito a monumento cum timore, et gaudio currebant ad annunciandum discipulis eius, ἐξεληθοῦσαι, ἔδραμον. Nescio an interpretis, an librarii primo hallucinati sunt oculi. Nam statim sequitur, quod in quattuor quos inspexi codicibus non inveni latine, quod legi in quattuor graecis...

<sup>838</sup> 1516 *New Testament (Apologia)*: Laurentius Valla septem bonae fidei codices se secutum fuisse testatur. Nos in prima recognitione quattuor Graecis adiuti sumus, in posteriore quinque. Deinde consultis tum pervetustis tum emendatis aliquot latinae linguae voluminibus. Nec hoc contenti discussis et exploratis probatissimis autoribus, non oscitanter observavimus quod citarint, quod legerint, quid emendarint, quid interpreterentur. Atque hisce rebus omnibus qua licuit vigilantia, certe, summa fide, collatis ac pensatis, quod optimum iudicavimus, secuti sumus, et hac lege in medium contulimus, ut nihilo secius suo quisque iudicio frueretur...

<sup>839</sup> For a telling example, see Beatus' foreword to the 1535 Froben Livy edition, page 6: Exemplar primae decadis manu scriptum sane quam eleganter, quod nobis communicavit non gente solum sed et literis clarus ille Vormaciensis ecclesiae decanus, dominus Reinhardus a Rietpur, desumptum illic ex bibliotheca publica, primis duobus ternionibus carebat, quos nebulo quispiam desecuerat, dum liber alicubi incustodius iacet. Idem scelus et in fine voluminis commissum. Quare coacti sumus hic aliquot paginas transilire.



with ambiguous words such as *codex* and *exemplar*.<sup>840</sup> For example, only a few incomplete manuscripts of Livy's *Ab urbe condita* (*From the Founding of the City*) had survived the upheavals that shook Italy in the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>841</sup> The German humanist Simon Grynaeus (1493-1541) found one of these survivors at Lorsch Abbey near Worms and sent it to Jerome Froben. In his foreword to the 1531 Froben edition of Livy's *Ab urbe condita* – the *editio princeps* of the first five books of the fifth decade of Livy's history based on the same Lorsch manuscript – Erasmus praised this 'exemplar of most admirable antiquity' coming from a 'monastery founded by Charlemagne'.<sup>842</sup> He noted that even though it was a great challenge to get this manuscript ready for the typesetters, 'we did everything possible such that we did not stray at all from the original (*archetypus*) when copying it'.<sup>843</sup> 'If only we could have this work whole', Erasmus lamented. He held out hope that someday, maybe in far-away Denmark, Poland or elsewhere in Germany, scholars would uncover and faithfully print more unedited fragments of the work of Livy, the 'prince of Latin history'.<sup>844</sup> Modern scholars have criticized Erasmus' use of manuscripts for the 1516 Froben *New Testament*, especially when he supplied a missing text of the final verses of the *Apocalypse* by writing in his own Greek translation of the Latin.<sup>845</sup> For this work, however, Erasmus clearly wished readers to believe that his treatment and use of manuscripts and older exemplars had been judicious and thorough. Humanist respect for the manuscript tradition, even if it could sometimes be more in word than in deed, also entailed respect for able and careful transmitters of a given text such as Petrarch, who himself wrote little of his significant work

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<sup>840</sup> See Allen 335 about Seneca. See Allen 446, 59-67 about 1516 *New Testament*.

<sup>841</sup> Giuseppe Billanovich, 'Petrarch and the Textual Tradition of Livy', in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14 (1951): 199-200.

<sup>842</sup> Allen 2435, 37-45.

<sup>843</sup> Allen 2435, 45-47: Unde non parum negotii fuit in parando exemplari quod typographicis operis traderetur utendum. Nec minore cura quam fide advigilatum est ne usquam in describendo ab archetypo recederetur.

<sup>844</sup> Allen 2435, 52-56; 29-37.

<sup>845</sup> Joseph M. Levine, 'Erasmus and the Problem of the Johannine Comma', in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58: 4 (1997): 579-582.

on Livy.<sup>846</sup> Valla worked with an edition of Livy's work that had undergone correction at Petrarch's hand and he valued the poet's careful treatment of the text.<sup>847</sup> In his foreword to the 1535 Froben Livy edition, Beatus cited and praised the prior work of Petrarch, of Valla and also of Giovanni Andrea Bussi, the latter of whom edited the *editio princeps* of Livy's works that Sweynheim and Pannartz printed in Rome in 1469, only shortly after they had printed their first edition of Jerome's letters in 1468.<sup>848</sup> Kenney is not alone in his belief that Italian humanist scholarship attained 'its most perfect character in Poliziano',<sup>849</sup> but even if Poliziano's theories of textual criticism and his careful treatment and classification of manuscripts were exceptional in how closely they resembled some modern textual-critical methods, he did not work in a vacuum.<sup>850</sup> The diligent search for and use of manuscripts lay at the core of textual-critical theories that humanist scholars espoused and promoted, even if their practice, like Poliziano's, often fell short of the mark they set for themselves.<sup>851</sup> We can debate humanists' reliance on corrections *ope ingenii* and how much and how carefully they made corrections *ope codicum*, but I believe that few contemporary humanists, had they lived and worked in ideal conditions, would have disagreed with Erasmus' warning that textual correction 'must be done with the caution and restraint with which all books, and particularly the Holy Scriptures, deserve to be treated'.<sup>852</sup>

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<sup>846</sup> Billanovich, 'Petrarch and the Textual Tradition of Livy', 203.

<sup>847</sup> This is MS London, British Library, Harley 2493. See Linde, 'Lorenzo Valla's Textual Criticism', 192-93.

<sup>848</sup> Billanovich, 'Petrarch and the Textual Tradition', 180-181, note 3: Franciscus Petrarcha, aut Victorinus Feltrensis, pro illo indaverant fortassis primum substituit declinaverat. Id postea Laurentium quoque Vallam, virum in literis prorsus incomparabilem, fallere potuit. Nam aiunt hunc in restituendo Livium multum operae sumpsisse...Multum miror cur ita veteribus illis, nempe Victorino Feltrensi, Petrarchae, Aleriensi pontifici, quoties locum aliquem non satis assquerentur, de suo quidvis addere libuerit. See also *Scribes and Scholars*, 130-131.

<sup>849</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 5.

<sup>850</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 7. See Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22-23.

<sup>851</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 8.

<sup>852</sup> Allen 182, 159-162: Immo tanto magis nefas est depravare, tantoque attentius corrigendum a doctis quod per incitiam est adulteratum; ea tamen cautione temperantiaque, quae cum omnibus libris tum sacris in primis debetur.

Among the ideas underlying humanists' belief in the importance of manuscripts, one was that translations of texts could be improved and corrected by having recourse to texts in the original languages. Common to Valla and to Erasmus, especially in their work on the New Testament, was an unshakable belief in the 'Greek Truth'; that is, they believed that the Greek text was the ultimate source for corrections and for the true reading of the text. In his *Annotations to the New Testament*, Valla repeatedly cited the *Graeca veritas* in support of his proposed changes to the common translation of the sacred text,<sup>853</sup> and from his investigations Bentley concludes that 'knowledge of Greek was for Valla the indispensable prerequisite for New Testament exegesis'.<sup>854</sup> We see a noteworthy example of Valla's use of the Greek text in his grammatical analysis of the verbs *exaltare* and *exultare* in Psalm 50, the well-known *Miserere* featured in the seven Penitential Psalms:

I would also translate that passage in the Psalm with the ablative rather than with the accusative, even if the Greek takes the accusative. For each language has its own way of speaking: *Et exaltabo lingua mea iustitiam tuam*, and in the other Psalm, *et iustitia tua exultabunt*. This is so because the Greeks are accustomed to use the accusative in order to express dative force – which is like our ablative – or genitive force.<sup>855</sup>

We shall come back to this text later in this chapter, but for now we can take it as one of many examples where Valla used the *Graeca veritas* in order to inform his analysis of the Latin text of the New Testament. Erasmus and the Froben editors were likewise committed to the *Graeca veritas* as well as to the *Hebraica veritas* that Jerome promoted with such energy

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<sup>853</sup> See 1526 *Annotationes*, page 50 (Matthew 22) for many explicit references to the *Graeca veritas*. For a shorter quote see page 341 (Apocalypse 5): *Et erat numerus eorum millia millium*.) Non potuit lingua latina implere Graecam veritatem, in qua numerus immensus significatur. Dicitur enim myriades myridum, et chiliades chiliadum. For another example see 1526 *Annotationes*, page 242. It is hard to turn a page in Perosa's edition of Valla's *Collatio* without seeing examples in which Valla based his conclusions on the Greek. See, for example, Valla, *Collatio Novi Testamenti*, 11-73.

<sup>854</sup> Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 61.

<sup>855</sup> 1526 *Annotationes*, page 20 (Matthew 5): *Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur*.) Ego dixissem, iustitia. De iis enim opinor deum loqui, qui propter iustitiam esuriunt et sitiunt, cum addatur, 'quoniam satiabuntur'. Transtulissem quoque illud in Psalmo per ablativum potius quam per accusativum, etsi graece est accusativus. Nam suus est illis loquendi modus. Ex exaltabit lingua mea iustitiam tuam, ut sit in altero psalmo, et iustitia tua exultabunt. Quod Graeci soleant ponere accusativum pro dativo, qui instar est ablativi nostri, sive pro genitivo, cum ea quae posterius dicam testimonio sunt, tum illud superius: 'Habitavit in civitate Nazareth.' *Ἐν πόλιν*, Graece est, in civitatem. Taceo quod interpretes pro urbs ponit civitas.

throughout his later scholarly career. In his commentaries for the 1516 Froben *New Testament*, Erasmus often referred to the *Graeca veritas* and used it in much the same way that Valla did in order to analyze and to propose corrections to the Latin translation of the New Testament. According to Joseph Levine, ‘if anything, [Erasmus] was more interested than Valla in the Greek than the Latin’ in his commentaries for the 1516 Froben *New Testament*.<sup>856</sup> From his detailed analysis of Erasmus’ New Testament scholarship, Krans has concluded that Erasmus was ‘convinced of the *Graeca veritas* principle, a conviction which goes back to his discovery and publication of Valla’s *Annotationes*, and for which he uses Jerome as an authority’.<sup>857</sup> We see this conviction in action when Erasmus changed the first sentence of the Gospel of John, *In principio erat verbum* (‘In the beginning was the word’), to *In principio erat sermo* (‘In the beginning was speech’). He justified this controversial change by citing the Greek text. Erasmus did not yet dare to change in the text of 1516 Froben *New Testament* even though his commentaries on this passage do not hide the fact that he was unhappy with the current Latin translation of λόγος as *verbum* in this context.<sup>858</sup> In the 1519 Froben *New Testament*, however, Erasmus changed a well-known Latin rendering of the Gospel Truth based on his belief that it did not adequately express the meaning of the Greek original, even though, or perhaps because, he knew that this change would give rise to a scholarly storm.<sup>859</sup> Erasmus’ and other Froben editors’ commitment to the ‘Hebrew Truth’ (*Hebraica veritas*) is likewise clear from their detailed introduction to the so-called *Quadruplex Psalterium* (*Quadruple Psalter*) that they included at the end of the

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<sup>856</sup> Levine, ‘Johannine Comma’, 581.

<sup>857</sup> Krans, *Beyond What is Written*, 24. For Krans’ discussion of the *Graeca veritas* in Erasmus’ *Annotationes* see pages 23-28.

<sup>858</sup> See 1516 *New Testament*, f. 352: *Erat verbum*.) λόγος, graecis varia significat, verbum, orationem, sermonem, rationem, modum, supputationem, nonnunquam et pro libro usurpatur a verbo λέγω, quod est dico sive colligo. Horum plaeraque divus Hieronymus putat competere in filium dei...

<sup>859</sup> For a recent article about this matter, see Denis Drysdall, ‘The two versions of Erasmus’s *Apologia de in principio erat sermo* and the role of Edward Lee’, in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Upsaliensis*, volume 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2012): 363-372.

1516 Jerome *Edition*'s eighth volume.<sup>860</sup> In this work we find the Septuagint Greek text of the Psalter alongside Jerome's *Psalterium Gallicanum* (the *Gallican Psalter* based on the Greek text in Origen's *Hexapla*) on the verso side of one folio, while on the facing recto side we find Jerome's *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos* (*Psalter according to the Hebrew*) alongside a Hebrew text of the Psalms. The Froben editors promised to have printed the whole *Quadruplex Psalterium* with the greatest possible care from 'most ancient originals (*archetypus*)' under Conrad Pellikan's leadership.<sup>861</sup> This foreword also acknowledged that the text of the Psalms should ideally be based on the *Hebraica veritas*, but nonetheless made the remark, at this time common and widespread, that they had found the Hebrew text of the Psalms 'significantly altered, we think, by the Jews of our own time, such that it be more favourable to their own interpretations of Scripture'.<sup>862</sup> Over a decade earlier in his foreword to Valla's *Annotationes*, Erasmus had already floated his suspicions about 'deliberate corruption' of the Hebrew text at the hands of Jewish scholars.<sup>863</sup> Erasmus believed that the study of Hebrew was a helpful, if not necessary, tool for the Biblical scholar and the theologian, but he did not practice what he preached and he never took the trouble to learn

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<sup>860</sup> Contemporaneous Biblical scholars made wide use of this Psalter. Martin Luther, for example, may have used other sources in order to write his own masterful German translation of the Psalms, but in his copy of the 1516 Edition, which survives today at Wittenberg's Lutheran Seminary and contains the 'greatest number of Luther's annotations on any author yet known', the *Quadruplex Psalterium* is one of the most heavily annotated parts of this copy. See *Annotierungen zu den Werken des Hieronymus*, 10. Another copy of the *Quadruplex Psalterium* as far away from Wittenberg both spiritually and physically as that at Saint Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers is likewise heavily annotated. See CWE 61, xxix.

<sup>861</sup> Appendix to 1516 *Edition* VIII (folio after 1516 *Edition* VIII, f. 104v): At enim nos pro virili in hoc incubuimus, ut, quemadmodum caetera nostra, sic haec in manus hominum quam emendatissima venirent. Et in Hebraicis praecipue curavimus ut quam minimum ab archetypis et his antiquissimis discederemus. Caeterum puncta quae nihil ad lectionem faciunt, sed ad cantum potius, consulto omisimus, quando ea res recens, et Constantini Caesaris aetate a Rabinis, quos vocant, adinventum narratur, ut quidam Iacobus Valentius, non omnino malus author, prodit. Quod si somnus obrepsit nobis alicubi, facile veniam dabit aequus lector, qui cum ipsam provinciae difficultatem, tum angustiam temporis, quo haec festinantes absolvere coacti sumus, secum perpenderit. Porro fatemur ingenue hoc negotium οὐκ ἄμθου δκσέως, quod aiunt, nos confecisse, sed adiutos opera doctissimi pariter et humanissimi patris Chonradi Pelicani Rubeaquensis, ex familia divi Francisci, cuius auspicio potissimum, haec res peracta est...

<sup>862</sup> Appendix to 1516 *Edition* VIII (folio after 1516 *Edition* VIII, f. 104v): Quid quod Hebraicam veritatem, ut vocant, in Iudaeorum nostri temporis, sic suspicamus, gratiam, nam illorum expositionibus admodum favet, nonnihil immutatam comperimus, ab aliquo Hebraice docto, siquidem exemplari Veneto, cum vetustissimis Hieronymi codicibus, multis locis non conveniebat.

<sup>863</sup> Allen 182, 116-125.

more than a smattering of Hebrew. Coupled with his suspicions about the integrity of the Hebrew text, we can conclude that even if Erasmus accepted in principle the idea of the *Hebraica veritas*, in his own Biblical scholarship he gave far more emphasis to the *Graeca veritas*, at least in part out of necessity owing to his ignorance of Hebrew. His belief in the possible corruption of the Biblical text by later Jews does not exclude his appreciation of the *Hebraica veritas*, to which other scholars who undertook significant work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, including Johannes Reuchlin, Pellikan and the Amerbach brothers, expressed an equally firm or a firmer commitment.

Although most of the scholars mentioned above and in the remainder of this thesis were members of religious orders or communities, all of them, religious and lay alike, worked in community. The ‘solitary scholar’ is a powerful and enduring image, but Valla’s wide circle of scholarly friends and supporters included colleagues at the University of Padua, the court of Alfonso V in Naples and at the Papal court of Nicholas V as well as scholars mixing under the auspices of Bessarion’s ‘Roman academy’.<sup>864</sup> Throughout the remainder of this thesis we shall see many examples in which it is clear that Erasmus and other scholars working at the Froben press were part of a broader scholarly community. It is in order to emphasize the communal nature of contemporary humanist scholarship that I have chosen to use vocabulary in this thesis which underlines the fact that the 1516 Jerome *Edition* was not Erasmus’ alone, but rather the product of a large group of scholars who worked on this *Edition* with, at and for the Amerbach–Froben press from 1507 to 1516. In addition to giving scholars financial, material, intellectual and moral support, such humanist communities, or the ‘republic of letters’, also ensured the connection between past and present and oversaw the transmission of texts from the manuscript tradition into the first

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<sup>864</sup> For information about Bessarion’s ‘academy’ see Concetta Bianca, ‘Roma e l’accademia bessarionea’, in *Bessarione e l’umanesimo* (Venezia: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, 1994), 119-128. See also the Simona Foà’s entry on Giannozzo Manetti in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 68, 613-617.

printed books. Giovanni Andrea Bussi (1417-1475), for example, lived in Rome and worked at the court of Pope Nicholas V in the 1450s when Valla was also there, and Bussi later collaborated closely with one of Valla's greatest supporters and sources of inspiration, Cardinal Basilios Bessarion (1403-1472).<sup>865</sup> While recent scholars such as Kenney have criticized Bussi's efforts as a textual critic, it is clear that he saw himself as an heir to great humanists such as Petrarch and Vittorino da Feltre, his teacher, and he was an acquaintance of men such as Pius II (1405-1458-1464) and Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481).<sup>866</sup> Maury Feld called Bessarion 'the animator of an international printing programme' that stemmed from three printing firms, one of them being that of Sweynheim and Pannartz, and there is no doubt that he was among the first collectors and proponents of the printed book in Italy.<sup>867</sup> While we must keep in mind the many factors that separated scholars from different generations and places, we should also remember the continuities and the connections which bound together the contemporary republic of letters as its members tried to preserve, to protect and to promote an embattled and battered Classical Tradition, some of whose textual traditions had already seen noteworthy corruption 'in the Roman era itself'.<sup>868</sup>

According to Bessarion's biographer Ludwig Mohler, it was Bessarion's Greek-language treatise on a passage from John 21, entitled *In illud Evangelii: 'Sic eum volo manere, quid ad te?'*, that inspired Valla to write his *Annotationes* in the last generation before the printing-press came to Italy.<sup>869</sup> Many scholars have already described in detail the

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<sup>865</sup> See Miglio's biography of Bussi in *Prefazioni*, xvii-xxxv. See Massimo Miglio's entry on Bussi in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 15, 565-572. See also Remigio Sabbadini's entry on Bussi in *Enciclopedia Italiana* 8, 162.

<sup>866</sup> See *Prefazioni*, xix-xxv. For criticism of Bussi see Kenney, *Classical Text*, 12-15.

<sup>867</sup> Ludwig Mohrer, *Kardinal Bessarion*, volume 1 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1967), 335. See also Maury Feld, 'A Theory of the Early Italian Printing Firm II', in *Harvard Library Bulletin* 34 (1986): 314-320; 329.

<sup>868</sup> See Billanovich, 'Petrarch and the Textual Tradition', 190, note 1.

<sup>869</sup> See Mohler, *Bessarion*, volume 1, 403. This work was the *In illud Evangelii secundum Ioannem*, which we can find in Latin translation in *Patrologia Graeca* 161, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1866). Mohler edited the Greek text in his 'Kardinal Bessarions kritische Untersuchung der Vulgata-stelle: *Sic eum volo manere, quid ad te?*', in *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 41 (1933): 188-206. For

noteworthy ties that bound Valla and this famous Byzantine scholar, churchman, statesman and book-collector, whom Valla hailed as ‘the most Greek of Latins and the most Latin of Greeks’ (*Latinorum Graecissimus, Graecorum Latinissimus*).<sup>870</sup> Bessarion admired Valla’s talents and presented them ably to his friend, patron of humanists and founder of the Vatican library, Nicholas V (1397-1447-1455). Valla later claimed that it was Bessarion’s intervention that helped to secure for him a position as a Papal secretary, and in this capacity Valla was able to associate with some of the greatest scholars of contemporary Italy.<sup>871</sup> Mohler has remarked that by virtue of his ‘pure philological work’ in his treatise on John 21:22, Bessarion was ‘a forerunner of Valla and Erasmus’.<sup>872</sup> In this work Bessarion repeatedly mentioned and praised the scholarship of Nicholas Maniacutia, the twelfth-century cleric whose biography of Jerome, included in the 1497-1498 Venetian edition of Jerome’s commentaries, we have already seen in the first part of this thesis.<sup>873</sup> ‘If anyone wants more evidence and wishes to learn more about this matter’, ‘then let him read the book entitled *Bibliothecae Suffraganeus* (*The Helper of the Bible*) written by Nicholas the deacon of Damasus, a man who seems to have been most expert in Hebrew and who expounded many things about the correction of Sacred Scripture in the times of Pope Lucius II’ (r. 1144-

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chronology of Valla’s composition of the *Annotationes* see Ulich Burke’s entry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. See the second chapter in Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1964), 19-36. See Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968).

<sup>870</sup> Vittorio Peri, ‘Nicola Maniacutia: Un Testimone della Filologia Romana del XII secolo’, in *Aevum* 41 (1967): 67. For more on Bessarion see Lotte Labowsky’s entry in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 9 (Roma: Società Grafica Italiana, 1967), 686-696. See *Scribes and Scholars*: 149-154; Mario Fois, *Il pensiero cristiano di Lorenzo Valla nel quadro storicoculturale del suo ambiente* (Roma: Gregorian University Press, 1969), 416-418. See Concetta Bianca, ed. *Scrittura, Biblioteche e Stampa a Roma nel Quattrocento: Aspetti e Problemi*, volume 1 (Vatican City: Scuola Vaticana Paleografia, 1980), 124-125. For an excellent summary of Bessarion’s scholarly engagements and work to assembly his library see Concetta Bianca, ‘La Formazione della Biblioteca Latina del Bessarione’, in *Scrittura, Biblioteche e Stampa*, volume 1, 103-165. See also John Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus: A Study of Cardinal Bessarion’s Latin Library* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

<sup>871</sup> See Mohler, *Bessarion*, volume 1, 260. Valla is cited in note 2: Nam Cardinalis Nicenus, vir de me optime meritus, et qui, ut Romam venirem mihi autor extitit, habet in opere meo partem.

<sup>872</sup> For more on Bessarion’s work with Valla, see John Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 11, especially note 39. See also Mohler, *Bessarion*, volume 1, 326; 331-334; 399. Mohler suggests that Valla’s collaboration with Bessarion was quite involved on page 403.

<sup>873</sup> See Peri, ‘Maniacutia’, 67-68; To see the passages where Bessarion cites Maniacutia, see Mohler, *Bessarion*, volume 1, 76; 82.



1145).<sup>874</sup> Linde has shown that Valla had already announced his ideas of textual criticism long before he had come into contact with Bessarion,<sup>875</sup> but since the two scholars were both interested in matters of textual criticism when they first came together at Rome, we have reason to believe that they could have spoken about the *Suffraganeus*. This becomes even more probable when we keep in mind that Valla's *Annotationes* 'were written in close connection with Bessarion's circle of humanist scholars' at Rome, including such luminaries as George of Trebizond, Theodore Gaza, Flavio Biondo and Niccolò Perotti'.<sup>876</sup> Concetta Bianca records it as a fact that Bessarion generously lent his codexes to other scholars and thereby 'allowed Valla to take in the vision of Nicholas Maniacutia's *Suffraganeus*'.<sup>877</sup> At the very least we know that the *Suffraganeus* was at this time in Bessarion's possession and that he had read his treatise *In illud Evangelii* to scholars in his circle before 1450.<sup>878</sup> Indeed, Linde's most recent research, yet to be published, shows that Bessarion had likely gone to the trouble to acquire two manuscripts of the *Suffraganeus*, since the manuscript now surviving at the Marciana was created after 1450, by which time Bessarion already knew the *Suffraganeus*. As we look at some of the editorial and philological work that Maniacutia undertook in his many works of Biblical scholarship, we shall see that humanists did not come up with their ideas about textual criticism *ex nihilo*. Although we must do so with caution, we shall conclude, as Linde did about Valla's work on Livy, Quintilian and the New Testament, that Maniacutia showed understanding of many of the factors 'listed among the

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<sup>874</sup> See *Patrologia Graeca* 161, 623-640: Si quis de his plura desiderat testimonia et latius nosse hanc rem cupit, Nicolaum legat tituli Damasi diaconum et bibliothecae suffraganeum, virum quantum intelligere licet, Hebraicae linguae peritissimum, qui, Lucii secundi Romani pontificis tempore...de sancta Scripturae emendatione multa disseruit.

<sup>875</sup> See Linde, 'Lorenzo Valla's Textual Criticism', 222.

<sup>876</sup> Mohler, *Bessarion*, volume 1, 403. See Bianca, 'Rome e l'accademia bessarionea', 120. See *La stampa greca a Venezia nei secoli XV e XVI*, ed. Marcello Finazzi (Venezia: Libreria vecchia del Sansovino, 1968), v.

<sup>877</sup> Bianca, 'Roma e l'accademia bessarionea', 120.

<sup>878</sup> See Cornelia Linde, 'Some Observations on Nicola Maniacutia's *Suffraganeus Bibliothecae*', in *Retelling the Bible: Literary, Historical and Social Contexts*, eds. Lucie Dolezalová and Tamás Visi (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Land, 2011), 160. The manuscript at the Marciana is Lat. Z. 289 and the only other known surviving copy is at Brussel's Royal Library (MS 4031-4033). See Peri, 'Maniacutia', 69-70.

causes of corruption by Reynolds and Wilson' and undertook sincere and noteworthy efforts to correct the Psalms in line with this understanding.<sup>879</sup> Valla may or may not have taken inspiration and ideas from Maniacutia's *Suffraganeus*. Nonetheless, in 1455, when he was made a canon of Saint John of the Lateran, where he was buried, Valla truly did follow Maniacutia's footsteps, who took up this same honour during the reign of Pope Eugenio III (r. 1145-1153).<sup>880</sup>

Before undertaking life as a Cistercian monk at Rome's Three Fountains Abbey near Saint Paul's outside the Walls, Maniacutia was first a priest at the Roman church San Lorenzo in Damaso – reputed to have been built by the same Pope Damasus who patronized Jerome and encouraged his efforts to undertake new translations of the Bible.<sup>881</sup> The prolific Benedictine scholar and monk André Wilmart once claimed of Maniacutia that 'no Christian since Saint Jerome had shown such boldness' in correcting the sacred text because of his great love for it.<sup>882</sup> This statement can seem exaggerated, but there is so little work on Maniacutia's scholarship that we have no grounds for rejecting it out of hand. From what I have seen of Maniacutia's writings, and especially of his *Suffraganeus* that Linde is now editing, I can only agree with Vittorio Peri that it is regrettable that 'up to our days learning and culture have not managed to preserve even his name without uncertainty and alterations', with most of his works remaining unedited and unknown.<sup>883</sup> The 1497-1498 Venetian edition

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<sup>879</sup> For a good, short biography of Maniacutia see Paolo Chiesa's entry in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 69, 30-32. See also Linde, 'Lorenzo Valla's Textual Criticism', 201.

<sup>880</sup> See Cornelia Linde, 'Einleitung', vi. This is Linde's introduction to the *Suffraganeus Bibliothecae*, whose publication is now underway at Brepols. Dr. Linde kindly sent me an electronic copy of her work in January 2013. In this thesis I shall cite her introduction as the 'Einleitung' and her critical text of the *Suffraganeus* as the *Suffraganeus*. These page numbers are subject to change, however, and the texts to changes as they undergo further editing and are published.

<sup>881</sup> For a summary of Maniacutia's works, see Linde, 'Some Observations', 159-168. For much more thorough information about Maniacutia's works see 'Einleitung', ix-xxii. For a short biographical article see Vittorio Peri, 'Notizia su Nicola Maniacutia, autore ecclesiastico romano del XII secolo' in *Aevum* 36 (1962): 534-538.

<sup>882</sup> Wilmart, 'Nicolas Manjacoria', 136.

<sup>883</sup> Vittorio Peri, 'Correctores immo corruptores. Un saggio di critica testuale nella Roma del XII secolo', in *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 20 (1977): 20. For more about the wide varieties in the spelling of Maniacutia's name

of Jerome's commentaries made Maniacutia's then un-attributed biography known to readers such as Erasmus and the Amerbach brothers,<sup>884</sup> but to this day Maniacutia and his works hold only the smallest place in the history of textual criticism.<sup>885</sup> Until 1977, when Peri published a critical text of Maniacutia's *Libellus de corruptione et correptione psalmorum et aliarum quarundam scripturarum* (*Booklet on the Corruption and the Degradation of the Psalms and of some other Scripture* – hereafter the *Libellus*), this work remained hidden away in its only known manuscript copy at Montpellier's School of Medicine. Soon Linde will be publishing a critical edition of Maniacutia's *Suffraganeus* under the auspices of the *Corpus Christianorum* along with a detailed introduction that I have cited in this thesis, and she is currently revising another article on Maniacutia and his work.<sup>886</sup> As I write these words in January 2013, however, only his *Life of Saint Jerome*, sections from his works edited by Peri and a handful of earlier scholars, and his poem about the Popes have come into print in critical editions, even though the authors of *Scribes and Scholars* call Maniacutia 'an expert critic'.<sup>887</sup> To say nothing of what light Maniacutia's works can shed on twelfth-century Roman religious life and scholarship, the *Libellus* itself, written in the early 1140s, is a text filled with remarkable philological insights that resembled in many respects those of early

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see Giovanni Mercati, 'Maniacoria Nicolas (Manjatoria, Manicoria, Mangiacoze, Maniecutius, Magnacucius?)', in his *Opere minori*, volume 2 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1937), 48-51.

<sup>884</sup> See Alberto Vaccari, 'Le antiche vite di S. Girolamo', in *Scritti di erudizione e di filologia*, volume 2: *Per la storia del testo e dell'esegesi biblica* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e di letteratura, 1958), 47.

<sup>885</sup> See Heinrich Denifle, 'Die Handschriften der Bibel-Correctorien des 13. Jahrhunderts', in *Archiv für Literatur-und-Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* 4 (1888): 270-276. About Petrarch see Billanovich, 'Petrarch and the Textual Tradition,' 137-208.

<sup>886</sup> Linde's preliminary critical text of the *Suffraganeus* is 171 pages long.

<sup>887</sup> See *Scribes and Scholars*, 278. We can find the forewords to Maniacutius' corrected versions of the *Psalterium Romanum* and the *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos* in R. Weber, 'Deux préfaces au Psautier dues à Nicolas Manjatoria cistercien à Trois-Fontaines', in *Revue Bénédictine* 63 (1953): 3-17. Large parts of his *Suffraganeus* have been published in Heinrich Denifle, 'Die Handschriften der Bibel-Correctorien des 13. Jahrhunderts', in *Archiv für Literatur-und-Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* 4 (1888): 270-276. We find another section of this same work in J. P. P. Martin, *Introduction à la critique générale du l'Ancien Testament. De l'origine du Pentateuque*, volume 1 (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1887), cii-cviii. For the poem about the popes see *Patriarch im Abendland: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Papsttums, Roms und Aquileias im Mittelalter*, eds. Heinrich Schmidinger, Heinz Dopsch et al (Salzburg: Sankt Peter, 1986).

humanists and of the Froben editors.<sup>888</sup> It dealt mainly with potential corruptions of the *Psalms* that Maniacutia remarked when revising the Psalter for his Cistercian Abbey using Jerome's *Iuxta Hebraeos*, a work that was very hard to come by in the twelfth century and which was still rare in Erasmus' day. For Mediaeval and early-modern Christians, the Psalms ranked among the most important sacred texts, since members of religious orders recited or sang over the course of each week, usually in community, all 150 of the Psalms included in the Divine Office, in which the Psalms take up much more time and space than any other Biblical text. To undertake to correct them, therefore, was not much less, or potentially no less daring and controversial than to correct the New Testament. Maniacutia nonetheless undertook this task with enthusiasm in his *Libellus*, apparently at the behest of a still unidentified 'Abbot Dominic'.<sup>889</sup>

Maniacutia understood from his readings of many different manuscripts of the Psalms as well as from excerpts taken from the Church Fathers' commentaries and letters that the sacred text was badly corrupted. Like Valla and Erasmus, given this understanding he showed a clear willingness to change the sacred text when he thought it corrupted and he also believed that to do so was a work of piety. In the *Libellus*' introductory paragraphs, Maniacutia summed up his textual-critical principles and remarked that the textual corruption which had crept into the Psalms demanded not complacent explanations or stubborn clinging to a faulted tradition, but responsible philological work in order to uncover the true text:

The corruptions that I have pointed out and many other mistakes besides were put forward by the Fathers. Nevertheless they are not to be stubbornly defended, nor should silence be imposed on me. There is no speech that cannot be explained, and for a thousand examples of corruptions you will find a thousand proposed resolutions.<sup>890</sup>

<sup>888</sup> The *Libellus* was written between 1141 and 1145 according to Peri. See Peri, '*Correctores*', 22-24.

<sup>889</sup> Linde, '*Einleitung*', xx-xxi.

<sup>890</sup> Peri, '*Correctores*', 92, lines 3-6 (hereafter cited without 'lines': e.g. Peri, '*Correctores*', 92, 3-6): Sane mendacia quae praenotavi sicut et multa alia a Patribus reperiuntur exposita. Veruntamen non ideo pertinaciter defendenda sunt, neque mihi silentium imponendum. Nihil enim dicitur, quod exponi non possit et ad mille corruptionum species mille species resolutionis invenies.

Maniacutia rejected arguments that he should not touch prior editions out of a misplaced reverence for texts, subject as they were to the corruptions inherent in the processes of translation and of transmission.<sup>891</sup> He claimed that he was following the injunctions of the Church Fathers, including Augustine and Jerome, in order to establish a more correct text and warned that this was necessary so that Christians not be made the laughing stock of Jews owing to the many mistakes in their texts of the Psalms.<sup>892</sup> In one example from the *Libellus* in which he explained problems with the standard Latin translation of the Psalms according to his knowledge of Hebrew, Maniacutia frankly condemned those mumpsimus who, ‘clinging to habit alone, prefer naked lies to the truth’.<sup>893</sup> He undertook his corrections of the Psalms owing to his own understanding of Christian piety and he wished his work to be of service to other Christians and to help them to preserve a better text of the Psalms in the future. In the *Suffraganeus* he asked his readers ‘not to correct anything in my text willy-nilly’ and ‘warned and enjoined’ them that if they were to ‘transcribe any books, compare them with corrected exemplars and correct them accordingly’. In his *Foreword to the Roman*

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<sup>891</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 121, 9-18: Erunt fortasse qui dicant: ‘Sufficiat nobis quod maioribus nostris novimus suffecisse; neque enim meliores sumus quam patres nostri. Quis est hic novas condens sententias sermonibus imperitis?’ Quibus respondendum est quod eos sanctos corrupta volumina non fecerunt, immo credendum est quia libenter habuissent veraces codices si certi esse super corruptionibus potuissent. Quod si negligentes fuerunt, nunquid eorum negligentia dampnum debet parere veritati? Vendicabuntne falsitates sibi in codicibus nostris locum pro temporis longitudine more eorum qui legitimum titulum non habentes in saecularibus causis praescriptionem opponunt an his quae dicuntur acquiescendum non erit, quia quidam homullus haec loquitur?

<sup>892</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 121, 19-25: Absit hoc a christiana doctrina et maxime ab his, qui humilitatis et discretionis spiritu vigent, ut pro despicibili persona despiciatur veritas, quod ab his solet fieri, qui secundum faciem iudicant. Immo in varietatibus codicum Latinorum ad consilium beati Augustini et Hieronymi recurrendum et si approbanda sunt, quae approbanda notavi, studiosi discutiendum nec quicquam dissimulandum, ne mendaciis praevalentibus Iudaeorum risui pateamus.

<sup>893</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 88, 1-11: Volens psalterium tuum sicut petieras, abba Dominice, ad exemplar nostrum id est Cisterciensis Ordinis, emendare, amplius hoc quam tuum deprehendi corruptum. Quid faciam? Si enim hoc egero, non diminui corruptiones, quin potius augmentavi; sin autem, suspicionem pigritiae forsam incurram, dum putare potes falsum esse quod assero. Ut igitur hanc suspicionem valeam evitare, laborem aggrediar eo grandiore quem exigis et nobis ipsis non minus quam tibi utilem, nisi forte in eorum manus incidat contemptorum, qui solam consuetudinem amplectentes nuda mendacia praeferunt veritati.

*Psalter* Maniacutia repeated an ancient injunction to scribes: ‘whoever finds this exemplar let him transcribe every word exactly as he found it.’<sup>894</sup>

‘The letter is like a whore, it lets everyone in.’<sup>895</sup> In the course of his analysis of Psalm 73, Maniacutia described with such words, apparently widespread at the time, the problems of translation that often gave birth to mixed results in manuscripts.<sup>896</sup> After citing several problematic texts of passages from Psalm 73 taken from the writings of Origen and of Augustine,<sup>897</sup> Maniacutia concluded: ‘Whatever is said can be explicated not in one but in many ways...therefore we are to approve that expression that does not put forward the mistake of some translator, but rather the truth of the writer himself.’ Maniacutia then cited Jerome’s different translation of the same passage from the Psalms as the best possible text in this case.<sup>898</sup> In his *Suffraganeus*, which Linde calls his *opus magnum*, Maniacutia provided brief comments on select passages from the Old Testament and from Jerome’s forewords to them.<sup>899</sup> He showed sound understanding of common causes of textual corruption and pithily summed up the three main sources of corruption that he saw: ‘exemplars are usually corrupted in three ways: by adding, by changing and by taking away from them’. Treating each type of corruption in turn, Maniacutia developed this idea in considerable detail in the

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<sup>894</sup> Peri, ‘Maniacutia’, 85: Da uno scrupulo filologico tanto raffinato discende alla fine necessariamente il paticipato monito a comportarsi similmente, *commonens et adiurans, ut, si quos libros transcripserint cum emendatis exemplaribus eos conferant et emendent* (SB, 13); e a ricambiare con uguale reverenza un testo corretto a prezzo di tanto laboriosa acribia: *moneo ut mea temere corrigere nihil audeat* (SB, 2); *obsecro ut quicumque transcripserit hoc exemplar singula sicut invenerit annotet* (PR).

<sup>895</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 111, 5-7: Quidquid enim dicitur potest exponi non solum uno modo sed etiam pluribus; unde ait quidam: littera est ut meretrix, omnes admittit.

<sup>896</sup> See Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 45, note 5.

<sup>897</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 110-111: In eodem [psalmo septuagesimo tertio]: *Quia repleti sunt qui obscurati sunt terrae domibus iniquitatum*. In Romano: *terrae domorum iniquitatum*. Origenes habuisse videtur exemplar in hoc loco similitudine vocabuli depravatum, qui ait: ‘repleti sunt qui obscurati sunt terrae dumis iniquitatum’; et addit: ‘dumi interpretantur spinae’. Augustinus: *repleti sunt qui obscurati sunt terrae domorum iniquarum*. Et omnes istae diversitates sibi expositiones inveniunt, si essent etiam multo plures. Nemo ergo se existimet habere litterae veritatem pro eo solo quod hanc expositam reperit.

<sup>898</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 111: Illa igitur approbanda est expositio, quae non errorem alicuius interpretis sed ipsam auctoris exprimit veritatem. Est autem in haec in praefato versu, Hieronymo transferente, quoniam *repletae sunt tenebris terrae habitationes iniquitate*.

<sup>899</sup> See Linde, ‘Einleitung’, xi.

*Suffraganeus*, and he repeated it elsewhere in his works.<sup>900</sup> In this formulation Maniacutia echoed Jerome, who addressed all these sources of corruption summed up in many of his commentaries.<sup>901</sup> For his part, Jerome was probably drawing from Quintilian, who had summed up these same sources of corruption in his *Institutio Oratoris* (*Institution of the Orator*).<sup>902</sup> Following these ancient leads, for Maniacutia corruption of the sacred text stemmed from three main sources; to wit, from ‘copyists both old and more recent (*scriptores, notarii*), translators (*interpretes, translatores*) and gloss-writers and exegetes (*expositores*)’. To use Peri’s description, ‘the carelessness (*incuria*) of the first, the inexperience (*imperitia*) of the second and the presumption (*praesumptio*) of the last...qualities that all three kinds of corruptors could also share’, lay at the root ‘of the errores (*errores*), of the abuses (*abusiones*) and of the corruptions (*vitia/mendacia*)’ which Maniacutia time and again bemoaned.<sup>903</sup> What is more, according to Maniacutia, men working on the texts over the ages, while ‘mixing different translations and twisting the sense of the prophetic sayings, [added] to the corruptions of translators, imposing on the prophets

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<sup>900</sup> *Suffraganeus*, 68-69: Tribus enim modis solent exemplaria depravari: apponendo, commutando et subtrahendo. See also Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 66: Falsarii scripturarum aliquando corrumpunt addendo, aliquando minuendo, aliquando autem commutando.

<sup>901</sup> Peri cites some examples in ‘Maniacutia’, 77. See Jerome’s Letter 57, 5; Letter 57, 11. See Jerome’s foreword to the Prophet Josue Ben Nun in PL 28, 462 C-463 A: Et ut in primis, quod saepe testatus sum, sciat me non in reprehensionem veterum nova cudere, sicut amici mei criminantur; sed pro virili parte offerre linguae meae hominibus (quos tamen nostra delectant), ut pro Graecorum *ἐξαπλοῖς*, quae et sumptu et labore maximo indigent, editionem nostram habeant. Et sicubi in antiquorum voluminum lectione dubitarint, haec illis conferentes, inveniant quod requirunt: maxime cum apud Latinos tot sint exemplaria, quot codices; et unusquisque pro arbitrio suo vel addiderit, vel subtraxerit quod ei visum est: et utique non possit verum esse quod dissonat. For more examples see PL 28, 506 A; PL 29, 1505 A.

<sup>902</sup> *Institutio oratoria* 1, 5, 6 in Quintilian, *Institution Oratoire*, ed. Jean Cousin (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1975), 88: Interim vitium, quod sit in singulis verbis, sit barbarismus. Occurrat mihi forsitan aliquis: ‘Quid hic promisso tanti operis dignum?’ aut ‘Quis hoc nescit, alios barbarismos scribendo fieri, alios loquendo (quia quod male scribitur male etiam dici necesse est, quae vitiose dixeris non utique et scripto peccant), illud prius adiectione, detractio, inmutatione, transmutatione, hoc secundum divisione, complexione, adspiratione, sono contineri?’ For a recent treatment of this passage in relation to Renaissance textual criticism, see Klara Vanek, *Ars corrigendi in der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 155-196; 256-257.

<sup>903</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 64.

things that had never come to their minds'.<sup>904</sup> According to Maniacutia, such 'corrupters' did worse still when they corrected texts according to their own whims:

Added to this is the presumption of some who, only too convinced that they are the correctors of the Church's books, make themselves their corruptors. Not concerned with truth but only with what seems correct to them, they put forth their own errors while thinking that they are correcting others' works.<sup>905</sup>

With such problematic custodians of Holy Writ, Maniacutia believed that 'whenever we find something added to the sacred text by careless hands, we should take it out, lest the damage of corruption grow with time'.<sup>906</sup> Maniacutia understood the historical nature of textual transmission, remarking that when it came to texts transferred by scribes 'from most antique manuscripts (*ex antiquissimis exemplaribus*) to modern ones', it was often the case that textual corruption grew over time. For him this problem was especially grave when it came to translations, which, 'the more they are spread through different languages (*ora*), the farther they stray from the truth'.<sup>907</sup> His understanding of this problem is similar to the ideas that Valla expressed when writing about the transmission of the New Testament: 'If within four hundred years those streams were already flowing so wildly, it is almost definite that after a thousand years (for it is indeed so many years from Jerome to now) this stream, which was never cleansed, has taken on some filth and pollution, at least in part.'<sup>908</sup> When treating the

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<sup>904</sup> Peri, '*Correctores*', 97, 1-4: Praeterea multos habuisse leguntur expositores, qui translationes varias commiscentes et ad diversos sensus dicta extorquentes prophetica, addunt ad mendacia translatorum multa imponentes prophetis, quae nunquam venerunt in cor eorum.

<sup>905</sup> Peri, '*Correctores*', 97, 5-8: Accedit ad hoc quorundam praesumptio, qui suo nimium credentes sensui correctores ecclesiasticorum librorum immo corruptores se faciunt. Non enim quid veritas habet, sed quid sibi videatur curantes, errores ostendunt suos, dum emendare se aestimant alienos.

<sup>906</sup> Peri, '*Correctores*', 100, 32-36: Cum autem aliquid in divinis voluminibus invenimus ab incautis appositum, hoc auferri licet, ne corruptionis vitium inoleat, ut illud quod pro defunctis legentes: 'et in carne mea videbo Deum', responsorii cursu seducti, addunt 'Savatorem meum'.

<sup>907</sup> Peri, '*Correctores*', 109, 29-30: Hoc autem vitium ab antiquissimis exemplaribus usque ad moderna, crescente tempore, crescere deprehenditur. Peri, '*Correctores*', 96-97, 39-1: Quo magis per diversa ora devolutae sunt, eo a veritate amplius elongarunt.

<sup>908</sup> Celenza, 'Valla's Radical Philology', 25-26: Deinde quod si intra quadringentos omnino annos ita turbidi a fonte fluebant rivi, verisimile est post mille annos – tot enim fere ab Hieronymo ad hoc aevum sunt – hunc rivum nunquam repurgatum sordes aliqua in parte ac limum contraxisse...



same corruption in the famous Psalm *Miserere* that Valla treated in his *Annotationes*, Maniacutia explained in detail its possible origins:

It is most remarkable that the word *exulto* in this example is constructed with the accusative, which I think I have hardly ever seen before...I suspect that scribes either changed the ablative case to the accusative or changed *exalto* into *exulto*...now in almost all exemplars they changed *exaltabo* into *exultabo*, and wherever there was a correct *a*, it has been scratched out by unlearned men and *u* has been put in its place.<sup>909</sup>

In this case Maniacutia alluded to what Reynolds and Wilson described as ‘errors of transposition’ and also described his theory about how errors spread by grammatical analysis of other sentences taken from this Psalm. In his *Libellus* Maniacutia also showed a clear understanding that scribes could mistake the spaces between letters. When mentioning the Song of Solomon, now usually transliterated as *shir ha-shirim* (‘The Song of Songs’), Maniacutia remarked that scribes ‘sometimes change the correct number of syllables, such that they say *scirascirim* for *scir ascirim*; that is, *scir* is singular, whose plural is *scirim*, *a* is like an article; or when they say *evangelium* instead of *eu angelium*’.<sup>910</sup> From many examples in the *Libellus* and in the *Suffraganeus*, we see that Maniacutia understood how corruption sprang from most of the sources of error that Reynolds and Williams identify: ‘lack of division between words’, ‘close similarity of certain letters’, ‘misreading of an abbreviation’, ‘confusion of two words of similar shape and spelling’, ‘mistakes due to changes in spelling and punctuation’, mistakes due to omissions and to additions and ‘errors of transmission’.<sup>911</sup>

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<sup>909</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 105-106, 32-8: In psalmo quinquagesimo, 24-8: ‘Exultabit lingua mea iustitiam tuam.’ Mirandum valde quod verbum ‘exulto’ in hoc loco cum accusativo construitur quod nusquam puto paenitus reperiri; unde quidem non immerito resolutione utuntur dicentes ‘exultando pronuntiabit’. Ego autem scriptores suspectos habeo, ne vel ablativos casus in accusativos vel ‘exalto’ mutaverint in ‘exulto’; nam et in sequentibus, ubi legimus: ‘exaltabo mane misericordiam tuam’, iam fere in cunctis exemplaribus pro ‘exaltabo’ ‘exultabo’ mutaverunt, et sicubi recte habetur ‘a’, ab imperitis abraditur ut pro ea ‘u’ rescribatur. Romani codices in hoc loco diversi sunt: quidam enim habent: ‘exaltabit lingua mea iustitiam tuam’, quidam vero: ‘exultabit lingua mea iustitia tua’ per ablativum. Quod et in alio psalmo legimus: ‘Memoriam abundantiae suavitatis tuae eructabunt et iustitia tua exultabunt’. Hieronymus transtulit: ‘cantabit lingua mea iustitiam tuam’, verbo utens quod magis cum eo ‘exalto’ consonat.

<sup>910</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 119, 20-22: Aliquando legitimas syllabas sub eodem numero diversificant, ut cum dicunt ‘scirascirim’ pro ‘scir ascirim’; est enim ‘scir’ singulare, cuius plurale est ‘scirim’, *a* velut articulus; et cum dicunt ‘evangelium’ pro *eu* ‘angelium’.

<sup>911</sup> I made use of Linde’s admirable summary of these principles in ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Textual Criticism’, 195-200.

‘Old exemplars’ (*antiquissima exemplaria*), ‘twisting the sense of words’ (*extorquens sensus*), ‘errors’ (*vitia, mendacia*), ‘to corrupt’ (*corrumpere, depravare, vitare*) – such words in Maniacutia’s *Libellus* have exact parallels in many examples taken from the works of early Italian humanists as well as from Erasmus.<sup>912</sup> In her classic monograph, Silvia Rizzo cites Peri’s work on Maniacutia on several occasions and notes that Maniacutia’s philological vocabulary was shared by the humanist writers that she painstakingly analyzes.<sup>913</sup> In order to point out that a text was ‘corrupted’, for example, Maniacutia used, among others, the adjectives *mendosus, depravatus, inemendatus, vitatus* and *corruptus*, and to describe the process of corruption he used the verbs *depravare, corrumpere* and *vitiare*. Corruption itself Maniacutia described with the nouns *corruptio, correptio, mendacia, vitium, mendum* and *depravatio*. In addition to sharing vocabulary with humanist scholars, much of which they all inherited from Jerome,<sup>914</sup> Peri has noted that Maniacutia also showed understanding of the principle of the ‘harder reading’ (*difficilior lectio*).<sup>915</sup> Reflecting on problems with the Psalms, with the *Book of Isaiah* and ‘in many other passages’, Maniacutia explained in detail problems with textual transmission and summed up his analysis with a quote from Origen’s *Commentary in Isaiah*: ‘Thus it is, that when we do not understand what is being said, we do nothing more commonly than fall back on easier things (*ad faciliora recurramus*)’.<sup>916</sup> Whatever qualifications we can make to Peri’s observations, we can no longer conclude that

<sup>912</sup> For a summary of much of this vocabulary, see Peri, ‘Maniacutia’, 79-82.

<sup>913</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 280, note 1. For more on such similarities see also Peri, ‘Maniacutia’, 79-82; Compare Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 219-226 and Peri, ‘Maniacutia’, 79-82.

<sup>914</sup> Peri, ‘Maniacutia’, 79-82.

<sup>915</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 78.

<sup>916</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 109-110, 29-13: Hoc autem vitium ab antiquissimis exemplaribus usque ad moderna, crescente tempore, crescere deprehenditur. Quod si fecissent interpretes et nova et vetera sic haberent; dum autem nova non solum a veteribus sed etiam inter se ipsa discordantia, hoc a praesumptoris factum dubitari non potest...Scripturam vero canonicam, quae usque ad unum iota plena est sacramentis, aliquatenus transformare non debet nec ea quae non intelligit in intelligibilia vertere, quia falsitas, veritatis specie palliata, nos quandoque facit errare, dum libentius id amplectimur quod ad intelligendum est facile, praesertim si novum sit et insolitum quodque pertinaciter defensum nos videri faciat doctiores. Quod cavendum ammonet Origenes, illud Isaiae exponens...‘Sic itaque, quando non intelligimus hoc quod dictum est, nihil ex eo minus faciamus neque ad faciliora recurramus sed expectemus donec gratia Dei subiciat nobis per illuminationem scientiae explanationem quaestionis aut per quem vult illuminet nos’.

Erasmus may have been ‘the first scholar to develop the principle of the harder reading’, even if he was the first to ‘employ it regularly in his criticism of the Greek New Testament’.<sup>917</sup> For Maniacutia was not the only Mediaeval scholar to show understanding of the ‘principle of the harder reading’. Gijs Coucke has shown that in his explanation of problems with the translation of Aristotle’s works, the *Expositio Problematum* (1310), the Mediaeval scholar Peter of Abano (1257-1316) announced something closely resembling the ‘principle of the harder reading’ when explaining a text in Aristotle’s *Problemata Physica* (*Problems*). According to Peter, the original text had most likely read *religione* (‘religion’), but ‘certain scribes wrote *regione* (‘region’) according to the easier understanding (*ad faciliorem intellectum scripserunt*)’.<sup>918</sup> Coucke’s article makes it clear that Peter understood many other causes of textual corruption that we have seen above and that he used ‘methods of textual criticism which continued to be used on a large scale until the nineteenth century’. Coucke’s conclusion is that ‘textual criticism, and more importantly the will to recover the *intentio auctoris*, was not something exclusively reserved for the Renaissance and the *ad fontes* movement’.<sup>919</sup>

Maniacutia also valued the older manuscripts that Renaissance humanists prized.<sup>920</sup> We see this nowhere better than in the telling story of his visit to the library of another important church in Rome, San Martino ai Monti. During this official visitation in the company of his abbot, Maniacutia saw a scribe correcting a book according to a newer manuscript. He asked the scribe, ‘How do you know, brother, that this newer book is more

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<sup>917</sup> Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 148.

<sup>918</sup> See Gijs Coucke, ‘Translation and Textual Criticism in the Middle Ages: Peter of Abano’s *Expositio Problematum* (1310)’, in *Filologia Mediolatina* 16 (2009): 201. The text in question is Aristotle’s *Problemata Physica* 4, 8. In his explanation of a problematic passage Peter wrote: Et hoc ideo quia hoc evellendum est non permanens in propria *religione*, id est ordine et loco, eo quod in religione ordo servari debet maxime et locus determinatus, unde et religio vocatur. Quidam autem ad faciliorem intellectum scripserunt *regione*.

<sup>919</sup> Coucke, ‘Translation and Textual Criticism’, 198; 212.

<sup>920</sup> For more on Maniacutia’s appreciation of manuscripts see Peri, ‘Maniacutia’, 85-86. For humanists’ appreciation of manuscripts see D’Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 77-79. See Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 147-168.

accurate than the older one?’<sup>921</sup> The scribe answered, ‘Because it has more things in it’. Maniacutia then vigorously criticized his brother: ‘Just as you think that the old edition has fewer things than in the new one, you can also understand that in the new edition there are superfluous things that are not in the old one.’<sup>922</sup> He then showed the young scribe a host of corrupted passages, ‘more than I remember ever having seen’, he wrote. This led the brothers at the library to ask him: ‘From where did these mistakes come?’ ‘From presumptuous men’, answered Maniacutia, ‘who put the founts of truth beneath their own judgement. And if the translators themselves did likewise, then all of the editions will be faulty’.<sup>923</sup> During this same visit Maniacutia inspected other books at this library that monks and scribes had corrupted when trying to imitate newer manuscripts.<sup>924</sup> Unlike his Cistercian brother, Maniacutia was not enthralled by the novelty of the latest manuscript editions and believed that there was a better way of correcting texts. In the introductory paragraphs of the *Libellus*, he presented the methods that underlay his own correction of the Psalms:

I decided that I would carefully note all the places that had been corrupted by scribes’ carelessness or by the presumption of others and try to uncover, as much as possible, the reasons behind many mistakes, with numerous opinions (*suffragiis*) from many sources at my disposal and most importantly

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<sup>921</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 121, 26-32: Lustrans nuper cum abbate meo B. officinas monasterii Sancti Martini in Monte, cuius ei visitatio iniuncta erat, cum scriptorium fuisset ingressi, veterem ibi Bibliothecam invenimus, quam ad novum exemplar frater quidam corrigere videbatur. Aggressus igitur eam discutere, quam redarguebant mendacii, vix corruptionem reperiebam, nisi in locis illis quae corrigi putabantur. Aio autem scriptori: ‘Unde scis, frater, novum hunc librum veraciorem veteri?’

<sup>922</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 121, 32-36: ‘Ab eo, ait, quod ibi plura continentur’. Cui inquam: ‘Sicut putas veterem habere minus ea, quae sunt in novo, sic putare potes in novo esse superflua, quae non sunt in veteri’. Et investigans adhuc loca, quae dicebantur correpta, tot appositiones repperi quot me nunquam recolo repperisse.

<sup>923</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 121-122, 36-8: Intendentes qui aderant transcurrere coeperunt et ipsi, sed ammirantes testabantur se horum plurima amplius non audisse. Loci vero fratres dolere, eo quod cum propria et opera et impensa suum exterminassent volumen. Quaerebant autem a me a quibus mala ista procederint. ‘A praesumptoribus’, inquam: ‘ipsi faciunt nobis malum hoc grande, qui fonte veritatis postposito ad sui coniecturam arbitrii vel minuunt vel apponent. Nam si interpretes hoc fecissent in cunctis exemplaribus haberentur.’ Ego autem, multa investigans volumina, in novis tantum haec superflua deprehendi, seu etiam in his veteribus, quae novorum aemulatio corrupisset.

<sup>924</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 122, 6-14: Ego autem, multa investigans volumina, in novis tantum haec superflua deprehendi, seu etiam in his veteribus, quae novorum aemulatio corrupisset. Dixi quoque in corde meo de adiunctionibus istis, ut omnes de tota Bibliotheca exciperem et dictiones inter quas continentur notarem; ut, verbi gratia, in primo Regum: ‘Locutus est cum Saule in solario cumque mane surrexissent.’ Si quid interponitur est superfluum. Habent enim codices depravati: ‘stravit autem Saul in solario et dormivit’. Sed hoc alias. Nunc ad psalterium revertamur.

drawing from the fountain of Hebrew Truth. Know that even if I have only tasted a little from this fountain, with the new translation of Saint Jerome, with the Roman translation and with other investigations as I am able to undertake them, from the combination of many sources (*multarum rationum collegio*) the truth will shine forth more easily.<sup>925</sup>

Although he valued the help that many exemplars could offer, Maniacutia explained on several occasions that he corrected the text according to the Hebrew only when he found disagreement in the many manuscripts of Latin texts that he gathered, in which case he would turn to the Hebrew as his ultimate authority.<sup>926</sup> On this and on many other occasions in the *Libellus* and in his other works, Maniacutia reported that he had looked at ‘many manuscripts’ in order to revise texts and showed understanding of the concepts of textual-critical correction with the help of codexes (*ope codicum*) and with the help of wit (*ope ingenii*).<sup>927</sup> Whereas humanists such as Valla and Erasmus often boasted about undertaking correction *ope ingenii* and could even be said to have set it on par with correction *ope codicum* as a textual-critical method,<sup>928</sup> Maniacutia does not seem to accept the validity of conjectural correction in his critical works. In any event he made very clear his reservations about it, as for example when he wrote in the *Suffraganeus*: ‘It would be a great presumption if we think that we can correct books, especially sacred books, according to our wits and

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<sup>925</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 88, 12-18: Decrevi namque cuncta loca, vel scriptorum incuria vel quorumlibet aliorum praesumptione corrupta, curiose notare et occasiones singularum corruptionum quanta possum cura detegere, adhibitis mihi ad hoc undecunque suffragiis et maxime fonte veritatis Hebraicae, de quo me scis etsi modicum degustasse, sed et nova beati Hieronymi ac Romana translatione, aliis quoque, si possum, probationibus, ut ex multarum rationum collegio veritas facilius eluscat.

<sup>926</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 107, 2-7: Ipsam sane bibliothecam hac cautela correxī, ut ubicumque Latina exemplaria, quorum plura collegeram, concordarent, etsi aliter haberet Hebraicum, tangere non praesumerem; ubi vero invenirentur discordia, his arbitrare credendum, etsi pauciora essent, quae concordare cum Hebraico reperissem, veras eorum assertiones arbitrans, quibus ea de quibus translata fuerant testimonium perhiberent. We see this idea also in the *Suffraganeus*, 59-65: Nam et in his tantummodo Hebraicos codices mihi censui consulendos in quibus nostri aperte sibi invicem dissonarent. Et quem contingeret de nostrorum innumera multitudine concordem his inveniri, hunc antiquorum exemplariorum puritatem servare, corruptos autem alios iudicavi.

<sup>927</sup> Peri, ‘*Maniacutia*’, 85-86.

<sup>928</sup> See Linde, ‘Lorenzo Valla’s Textual Criticism’, 221. See Anthony Grafton, *Scaliger. A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, volume 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 12-13.

conjecture.<sup>929</sup> In one of many examples from his *Libellus*, Maniacutia recounted with concern how scribes corrupted texts according to their own fancy:

In Psalm 41 we read: *Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem vivum*. Some men have changed *fortem* to *fontem*, having been seduced by that habit of human appetite, owing to which he who thirsts pants after a fountain rather than a strong person. I myself saw someone seduced by this same temptation, and when the Psalmist wrote: *Excitatus est tanquam dormiens Dominus quasi potens*, on account of which follows, *crapulatus a vino*, he put down *potans* instead of *potens* in his Psalter. Another man, moreover, changed *videbat* into *audiebat* in his Missal where we read about Exodus: *cunctus autem populus videbat voces*, since a voice is usually heard rather than seen. On account of such examples I did not say without reason above that no one should easily trust in his own judgement, since falsehood can often simulate truth and take its place owing to careless men.<sup>930</sup>

In his *Libellus* Maniacutia condemned conjectural corrections on many occasions and clearly set corrections *ope codicum*, based on the *Hebraica veritas*, above conjectural emendation as a superior method of trying to establish a better sacred text. In such examples as well as in his many statements in praise of the *Hebraica veritas* that we shall see below, we can see Maniacutia's belief that in order to attain to the 'correct reading' (*germana lectio*), one should try to find the 'old reading' (*vetus lectio*) through the careful collation of many manuscripts and through judicious recourse to the *Hebraica veritas*.<sup>931</sup>

Maniacutia's abiding commitment to the *Hebraica veritas* sprang from a remarkable engagement that he recounted to readers in the beginning of the *Libellus*. He first expressed his wonder that Jerome's *Iuxta Hebraeos* 'could hardly be found' in his day, which he thought especially unfortunate since Jerome had written 'in a certain foreword addressed to

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<sup>929</sup> Peri, 'Testimone', 82: Magnae praesumptionis est si ad nostri arbitrii coniecturam libros, praesertim canonicos, aestimaverimus corrigendos (SB, 2).

<sup>930</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 103-104, 30-3: In psalmo quadragesimo primo: 'Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem vivum.' Quidam commutaverunt 'fontem' ea humani appetitus consuetudine seducti, qua qui sitit ad fontem potius quam ad fortem anhelat. Vidi et ego quendam eadem seductum via, ubi psalmista ait: 'Excitatus est tanquam dormiens Dominus quasi potens', pro eo quod sequitur: 'crapulatus a vino', 'potans' pro 'potens' in suo psalterio posuisse. Alius autem in missali suo, ubi de Exodo legitur: 'cunctus autem populus videbat voces', pro 'videbat' commutaverat 'audiebat', quia vox audiri solet potius quam videri. Quare non immerito supra dixerim nullum debere suo arbitrio super his facile acquiescere, cum mendacium aliquando veritatem se simulans locum sibi eius ab incautis acquirat.

<sup>931</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 78-79; Kenney, *Classical Text*, 52.

Paula and Eustochium that no other edition expressed the truth so much as this one'.<sup>932</sup>

Owing to its rarity, Maniacutia remarked that he himself would likely never have come across the *Iuxta Hebraeos* had it not been for an argument about the Psalms with a Jewish man. He recounted:

I too would probably have never seen this work if a certain Jewish man, arguing with me and giving different variants for almost every word that I cited from the Psalms, pointed out to me that this work [Jerome's *Iuxta Hebraeos*] had been brought up from Monte Cassino and was in the possession of some priest [in Rome]. At this time I first aspired to learn Hebrew.<sup>933</sup>

Thanks to this pointer, Maniacutia was eventually able to see this same copy of *Iuxta Hebraeos*. To do so changed the direction of his scholarship, since he concluded after looking into *Iuxta Hebraeos* that 'in comparison with it other volumes of the Psalms hardly deserve to be called psalters', since it was 'much closer to the truth than the Roman edition'. He concluded that the Roman Psalter, the other psalters with which Origen, Augustine and Ambrose worked and many others besides, 'differed greatly from the Hebrew Truth'.<sup>934</sup> Maniacutia inherited the phrase *Hebraica veritas* from Jerome and used it repeatedly in the *Libellus*. He was convinced that more than simply a principle of textual criticism, the *Hebraica veritas* was the ultimate source for arriving at the correct Latin text of the Psalms. 'How do you discern truth from falsehood?', Maniacutia rhetorically asked his readers. 'I say, from the Hebrew fountain' (*ex Hebraico fonte*).<sup>935</sup> Without the help of the *Hebraica veritas*,

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<sup>932</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 90-91, 30-1: Interim mirari non desino quod haec Hieronymi iuxta Hebraicam veritatem translatio bibliothecis eius non habeatur inserta. Nam et si petente papa Damaso de Graeco prius transtulisse legatur et postea iterum atque iterum correxisse, ut ad Paulam et filiam eius Iuliam Eustochium in quodam prologo loquitur, nulla tamen earum editionum ita exprimit veritatem ut ista. Puto autem quod tam multis renovationibus iam ecclesia fastidita hanc, licet omnibus veriore, nec bibliothecis inserere nec cantare in ecclesiis procuravit. Unde usque ad haec temporis exemplar eius reperiri vix poterat.

<sup>933</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 91, 2-5: Nam et ego illud forsitan non haberem, nisi quidam Hebraeus, mecum disputans et paene singula quae ei opponebam, de psalmis aliter habere se asserens, hoc de Monte Cassino allatum esse penes quendam praesbyterum indicasset. Tunc primum ad Hebraeae linguae scientiam aspiravi.

<sup>934</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 91, 11-16: Cuius quidem comparatione alia psalmorum volumina vix sunt psalteria nominanda. Veruntamen haec translatio plus veritati propinqua est quam Romana, etsi haec et illa et quam edisserit Origines et quam exponit Augustinus et de qua tractat Ambrosius, sed et aliae quascumque vidisse me recolo multum dissideant ab Hebraica veritate.

<sup>935</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 92, 11-12: Respondebis: 'et unde mendacium a veritate discernam?' 'Ex Hebraico, inquam, fonte'.

Maniacutia believed that it would be almost impossible to get to the correct text. In the example from Psalm 41 in which scribes had written down *fontem* (fountain) for *fortem* (strong), he asked: ‘Who would believe that this word which we are treating was incorrect, unless this were uncovered by the Hebrew Truth, in which the words *fontem* and *forte* are so different, that they cannot be confused for each other as can happen in Latin?’<sup>936</sup> Maniacutia’s Hebrew scholarship in the *Libellus* appears equally as skilful as what we see in the 1516 *Edition*’s treatment of the Hebrew in Jerome’s letters and commentaries. Maniacutia’s frequent recourse to the *Hebraica veritas* is, moreover, much like Valla’s equally frequent and convinced recourse to the *Graeca veritas* in his *Annotationes*, and the Froben editors’ claim that the *Graeca veritas* was the cornerstone of the 1516 Froben *New Testament*.<sup>937</sup> Maniacutia’s esteem for the *Hebraica veritas* becomes even clearer when he mocked those who excused mistakes in copies of the Bible by claiming that Jews had deliberately corrupted the Biblical text, presumably in order to change passages foreshadowing Christ and Christian theology. Although he seems to entertain the possibility that this may have happened in some cases,<sup>938</sup> Maniacutia nonetheless noted that for the Jews, the Old Testament was ‘almost the only thing that they studied’ and that ‘among them there is no variety of translators, such that one translation can be mixed with another’.<sup>939</sup> ‘What is more’, he added, ‘an old manuscript (*exemplar*) is saved most diligently in each of their

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<sup>936</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 104, 3-6: Quis hoc de quo loquimur mendacium crederet, nisi detegeretur testimonio Hebraicae veritatis, in qua ‘fontem’ et ‘forte’ ita invenimus diversum, ut alterum pro altero sicut in Latino evenit nequeat commutari?

<sup>937</sup> See 1526 *Annotationes*, page 50 (Matthew 22) for many references to the ‘Greek Truth’ (*Graeca Veritas*). For a shorter quote see page 341 (Apocalypse 5): Et erat numerus eorum millia millium.) Non potuit lingua latina implere Graecam veritatem, in qua numerus immensus significatur. Dicitur enim myriades myridum, et chiliades chiliadum...

<sup>938</sup> See Linde, ‘Einleitung’, xxix. See *Suffraganeus*, 2 (44-49): Quod utique faciens idcirco dissertores Hebraicos suspectos nequaquam habui, quia uidelicet in aliquo mihi non fuit eorum dissertio necessaria, quod Iudaicam manifeste perfidiam impugnaret, cuius nimirum gratia veritatem occultare et litteram depravare dicuntur.

<sup>939</sup> Peri, ‘*Correctores*’, 92, 22-29: Dices autem: ‘forsan falsati sunt codices Iudaeorum.’ Respondebo: ‘pro dubitatione ista tua non negligam sapientium consilium’. Adhuc subiunges: ‘Ego eos credo falsatos esse’. Ad quod inquam: ‘postquam hoc probaveris respondebo; interim a Patrum monitis non recedam.’ Et tamen aurem accomoda et audi quomodo nequeant facile violari. Penes Vetus Testamentum est totum eorum studium et hoc apud eos nullis est translatoribus variatum, et una translatio possit cum alia commisceri.



synagogues'.<sup>940</sup> Maniacutia proclaimed the superiority of the *Hebraica veritas* with few reservations, and on this question he and Erasmus doubtless would have had an interesting conversation, since the latter long suspected 'deliberate corruption' of the Hebrew text at the hands of Jewish scribes and scholars.<sup>941</sup> Maniacutia instead criticized what he called the 'third-hand' Latin translations of the Psalms from the Greek, which would necessarily be less correct owing to the process of translating 'from the Hebrew to the Greek, then from the Greek to us'.<sup>942</sup>

In a footnote of his *La genesi del metodo del Lachmann* (*Genesis of Lachmann's Method*), Sebastiano Timpanaro remarks that Maniacutia 'enunciated certain theoretical principles of textual criticism' in his Biblical scholarship, but then observed that he was 'an isolated scholar' in twelfth-century Rome.<sup>943</sup> When we look, however, at Maniacutia's works as well as at evidence in Peri's two articles treating his Biblical scholarship, it is most unlikely that Maniacutia was a voice of textual criticism crying in an intellectual wilderness: Rome was, after all, the seat of Western Christendom.<sup>944</sup> Elsewhere in contemporary Europe, other Christian scholars were consulting Jewish scholars for their work and collating

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<sup>940</sup> See *Booklet* in Peri, 'Correctores', 92, 29-30: Praeterea vetus exemplar summo studio exaratum in synagogae loculo magna diligentia custoditur.

<sup>941</sup> Allen 182, 116-125.

<sup>942</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 96-97, 29-4: ...iam nunc ad pollicitum meum de psalmis veniam et huius editionis multis coram positis exemplaribus, quid in eorum varietatibus eligendum sit breviter assignabo, ut verbi gratia habet hoc exemplar: 'Sivit anima mea ad Deum fontem, illud vero ad Deum fortem.' Quid horum verum sit – nam utrunque verum esse non potest, cum propheta diversus a se ipso non fuerit – quibuscunque argumentis valeo et maxime veritatis Hebraicae testimonio, ut praedictum est, indagabo. Ab eo enim fonte hauserunt Graeci, quae sunt postea propinata Latinis; quare mendosiores sunt translationes nostrae de Graeco sumptae translatoribus de Hebraico editis, quia scilicet tertio deducta gradu, dum ab Hebraeis ad Graecos, a Graecis ad nos devenerunt. Quo magis per diversa ora devolutae sunt, eo a veritate amplius elongarunt. Praeterea multos habuisse leguntur expositores, qui translationes varias commiscentes et ad diversos sensus dicta extorquentes phphetica, addunt ad mendacia translatorum multa imponentes prophetis, quae nunquam venerunt in cor eorum.

<sup>943</sup> See Sebastiano Timpanaro, *Il Genesio del metodo del Lachmann* (Torino: UTET Univeristà, 2003), 13, note 1: Ma già il Medioeveo (sec. XII) aveva avuto un isolato, e per più aspetti interessante, enunciatore di alcuni principi teorici della critica testuale, il romano Nicola Maniacutia.

<sup>944</sup> See Paola Supino Martini's 'Société et culture écrite', in *Rome au Moyen Âge*, ed. André Vauchez (Paris: Riveneuve, 2010), 351-384. See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964). For her writings on Maniacutia see pages 79-81.

manuscripts in order to arrive at a better Biblical text.<sup>945</sup> In Maniacutia's Rome, the two stories about his conversations at San Martino ai Monti and his arguments about the Psalms with a Jewish man point to a 'lively mixture of Roman intellectual life' in which he took part.<sup>946</sup> What is more, Maniacutia's complaint about sceptical contemporary scholars in his *Vita beatarum Praxedis et Pudentianae* (*Life of Saints Praxedes and Pudentiana*) suggests that his position as a textual critic 'was not the most radical' in the Roman scholarly circles of his day. Maniacutia would not heed the 'nonsense' (*vaniloquia*) of contemporaries who apparently 'prohibited reading the deeds of the saints since there are many things recounted in them that are made up (*ficta*) by scholars rather than their true deeds'.<sup>947</sup> Twelfth-century Roman textual scholarship could even breach the divide between genders. Maniacutia may not have been another Abelard, but his edition of the Roman Psalter had been commissioned by and was dedicated to an unidentified 'most noble virgin named Scotta'.<sup>948</sup> He also claimed to have written his *Suffraganeus* at the request and with the financial backing (*ad instantiam et sumptibus*) of a certain Constantia, who was most likely his mother. Maniacutia seems to have followed Jerome's example closely by keeping pious contacts with other consecrated virgins.<sup>949</sup>

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<sup>945</sup> See Philipp Nothaft, *Dating the Passion: the life of Jesus and the emergence of scientific chronology (200-1600)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012). See Linde, 'Einleitung', xxvii. For more sources about Mediaeval Biblical scholarship see Eugene Rice, *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefevre D'Etaples and Related Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 486.

<sup>946</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 83-84. See also, 'Un testimone', 87-90.

<sup>947</sup> Peri, 'Maniacutia', 88: Eppure la posizione di Nicola non è, sul piano critico, la più spinta fra quelle che l'ambiente romano del tempo conosceva. Egli ci tiene a precisarlo. *Sed nec eorum vaniloquia me ab hoc avertere debuerunt, qui sanctorum gesta ideo legi prohibent quia multa in eis contineantur, quae potius a doctoribus ficta quam a sanctis seu illis atque illis sint effecta personis* (VPP). Dobbiamo dunque pensare che nella Roma del Maniacutia esistessero dei circoli culturali o almeno un gruppo di persone ben più radicale nella applicazione del metodo critico, anche ai testi di contenuto e d'uso liturgico, di quanto egli stesso non fosse.

<sup>948</sup> See Chiesa in *Dizionario biografico* 69, 31. For this foreword see Weber, 'Deux préfaces', 3-17.

<sup>949</sup> See *Suffraganeus*, 1, lines 1-4: Incipit Suffraganeus Bibliothecae editus a Nicolao Maniacoria diacono ecclesiae sancti Damasi de urbe ad instantiam et sumptibus dominae Constantiae quae obiit tempore papae Lucii secundi. See Linde, 'Einleitung', ix; xii-xv. See Peri, 'Maniacutia', 74.

Coucke's article on Peter of Abano is only one of many recent works emphasizing that Renaissance humanist scholars did not invent *ex nihilo* textual criticism and editing, but instead built on and relied on the work of Mediaeval scholars. Poliziano, for example, used Peter's edition for his own work on Aristotle's *Problemata*.<sup>950</sup> Although he criticized Peter, Poliziano also called him 'most learned in the natural sciences and in medicine' and expressed his understanding that owing to the times in which he lived, Peter was unable to attain to the expertise in both Latin and Greek which was needed in order to prepare an adequate translation.<sup>951</sup> Renaissance humanists were keen to criticize their Mediaeval forebears, but perhaps this was in part because they took for granted their debts to them.<sup>952</sup> Valla's debts to Maniacutia, direct or not, were probably not lost on the creator of a fifteenth-century manuscript now at Brussels' Royal Library, Johannes of Rabenstein (1437-1473).<sup>953</sup> In this manuscript, one of two surviving manuscripts of Maniacutia's *Suffraganeus* is bound together with one of the few surviving copies of Valla's *Annotationes*. The latter is the only known surviving copy of the manuscript tradition of Valla's *Annotationes* that served as the basis for the edition which Erasmus edited and published at Paris in 1505.<sup>954</sup>

We can explain continuities in the traditions of textual criticism at least in part by remarking that Mediaeval and Renaissance scholars relied on many, if not most, of the same sources for their work; that is, the pagan Classics and the Church Fathers. We cannot rule out

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<sup>950</sup> Coucke, 'Translation and Textual Criticism', 194-195.

<sup>951</sup> *Miscellaneorum Centuriae primae* 90 in 1498 Poliziano, pages 458-459: Atque locum eundem male versum a Petro etiam Aponensi, cui cognomentum ex re Conciliatori factum naturae rerum, ac medicinae consultissimo. Sed ut tum fuere tempora, parum linguae utriusque perito homine minus equidem indigner. Is autem errantem suo semet indicio prodit, in commentario quodam super haec ipsa problemata composito. See Coucke, 'Translation and Textual Criticism', 195.

<sup>952</sup> See, for example, Bianca's treatment of Salutati's knowledge of Classical and Mediaeval scientific texts in her introduction to *De fato et fortuna*, lxxii-lxxvi.

<sup>953</sup> For more about Rabenstein and the history of this manuscript, see Linde, 'Einleitung', liv-lviii. See also Peri, 'Maniacutia', 72. Writing about this 'coincidence', Peri concludes: Si trattasse anche di una semplice coincidenza materiale, esse si presenta già culturalmente non irrilevante e non completamente casuale.

<sup>954</sup> See J. Van den Gheyn, 'Nicolas Maniacoria Correcteur de la Bible', in *Revue Biblique Internationale* 8 (1899): 289-295.

altogether that Valla, Erasmus and the Froben editors were familiar with Maniacutia's works, at least through the medium of Bessarion's treatise. The sixteenth-century Dutch Biblical scholar Willem van der Lind (1525-1588), for example, drew from Bessarion's tract *In illud Evangelii* and therefore would have known at least indirectly of Maniacutia and his work.<sup>955</sup> The best explanation for the similarities between these scholars' textual criticism is that they shared a common inspiration and source. In the works of Jerome, well known to all the above scholars, we see examples of most of the principles of textual criticism that we have seen in the above pages. In his letter *Vere in vobis* to Sunnia and to Fretela, when treating a passage from the Psalm 21, Jerome pointed out a problem with the text and remarked, 'if something is corrupted by the fault of scribes, it is foolish to try to defend it'.<sup>956</sup> Jerome understood common sources of textual corruption and often complained about them in his letters and in his commentaries. In the commentary on Ezekiel, he complained about scribes' mistakes (*scriptorum vitio*) and ignorance (*imperitia*), owing to which the text had been corrupted (*depravatum*) and would become even more corrupted over time.<sup>957</sup> When it came to the Latin New Testament, Jerome famously remarked to Pope Damasus: 'there are almost as many variants as there are codexes'.<sup>958</sup> Evaristo Arns has summarized with admirable brevity the textual-critical terminology that Jerome used in his works, which itself was 'not

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<sup>955</sup> See Peri, 'Maniacutia', 68.

<sup>956</sup> Letter 106, 12: Vigesimo primo: Brevi enim, si quid scriptorum errore mutatum est, stulta credimus contentione defendere.

<sup>957</sup> For this commentary see PL 25, 0376 C-D: Et diligentem et studiosum lectorem admonendum puto: si tamen scientia Scripturarum, et non vanis oratorum declamationibus ducitur, ut sciat omnia prope verba Hebraica, et nomina, quae in Graeca et Latina translatione sunt posita, nimia vetustate corrupta, scriptorumque vitio depravata, et dum de inemendatis scribuntur inemendatiora, de verbis Hebraicis facta esse Sarmatica, immo nullius gentis, dum et Hebraea esse desierint, et aliena esse non coeperint. See PL 25, 0379 C: Qui ab uno incipiens, ita ad quatuor pervenit, ut denarium impleat numerum. Cujus longitudo habebat tredecim cubitos: pro qua in Septuaginta rursum ponitur latitudo, quod mihi videtur scriptorum negligentia depravatum; PL 25, 0381 B: Haec fastidioso lectori scio molesta fore: sed volui breviter ostendere, quantum temporis longitudine, immo scriptorum vitio, et ut apertius loquar, imperitia ab Hebraica veritate discrepet antiqua translatio: praecipueque in Hebraicis nominibus, quae nos de aliorum editionibus in Latinum sermonem expressimus, non tam explanationem dictionum, quam suspicionem nostram simpliciter indicantes.

<sup>958</sup> See PL 29, 526-527: Si enim Latinis exemplaribus fides est adhibenda, respondeant, quibus: tot enim sunt exemplaria pene quot codices. Sin autem veritas est quaerenda de pluribus: cur non ad Graecam originem revertentes, ea quae vel a vitiosis interpretibus male edita, vel a praesumptoribus imperitis emendata perversius, vel a librariis dormitantibus addita sunt, aut mutata, corrigimus?

altogether original' since it had Classical precursors such as Quintilian (c.40-c.100 AD),<sup>959</sup> whose passages on the causes of textual corruption in the first book the *Institutio Oratoris* were likewise well known to Renaissance humanists such as Valla and Erasmus.<sup>960</sup> Arns lists several outstanding and recurring words in Jerome's vocabulary of correction and of editing, most of which we find in Silvia Rizzo's summary of the early humanist vocabulary of correction. She shows numerous examples in which humanists took from Jerome their lessons about how to correct texts.<sup>961</sup> Filippo Beroaldo the Elder,<sup>962</sup> for example, came to understand that scribes had a habit of making and of spreading mistakes by combining and by dividing words, from his study of Jerome's foreword to the *Vulgate according to the Septuagint*.<sup>963</sup> Access to manuscripts was important for Jerome's textual criticism, and correction *ope codicum* was one of the many methods that he employed in order to emend a text.<sup>964</sup> As for the idea of the *Hebraica veritas*, the term itself may not have been Jerome's creation, but there is now an elephantine body of scholarly literature showing that Jerome

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<sup>959</sup> See *Dictionary of Art*, volume 25, ed. Jane Turner (London: Grove's Dictionaries, 1996), 824.

<sup>960</sup> See Linde, 'Lorenzo Valla's Textual Criticism', 222-223. The rest of book of five of the *Institutio oratoria* deals with many common sources of corruption of the Latin language.

<sup>961</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 243-299. See Paulo Evaristo Arns, *La technique du livre d'après Saint Jérôme* (Paris, E. de Boccard, 1953), 70-75. See page 70 for quote about how Jerome's textual-critical vocabulary was not terribly original.

<sup>962</sup> See Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 233-243: Anche a lui [il Beroaldo] è ben nota la categoria di errori originata da errata divisione delle parole e richiama in proposito un'osservazione di S. Girolamo...scribit divus Hieronymus in prologo Paralipomenon quod saepe culpa scriptorum unum nomen in duo vel tria vocabula dividitur: quod verissimum esse in compluribus aliis scriptoribus tum in Plautino poemate deprendi ubi saepe duo vel etiam tria nomina subtractis e medio syllabis in unum vocabulum coagmentata deprendes vel e regione unum nomen propter latitudinem suam in duo vel tria vocabula divisum. Legebam adeo nuper Persam Plautinam fabulam in qua sic loquitur Toxillus servus: 'hunc ego hominem hodie intra semina doctis ducam dolis'; ubi illud 'intra semina' ita emendandum est 'in trasenna'.

<sup>963</sup> See Jerome's *Praefatio in librum Paralipomenon iuxta LXX interpretes* in PL 29, 402 A: Nec hoc Septuaginta interpretibus, qui Spiritu sancto pleni, ea quae vera fuerant, transtulerunt, sed scriptorum culpa ascribendum, dum de inemendatis inemendata scriptitant: et saepe tria nomina, subtractis e medio syllabis, in unum vocabulum cogunt, vel e regione unum nomen, propter latitudinem suam, in duo, vel tria vocabula dividunt. See Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 233.

<sup>964</sup> See Arns, *La technique du livre*, 186-188. See Jerome's foreword to his commentary on Job in PL 28, 1083 A: Habeant qui volunt veteres libros, vel in membranis purpureis auro argentoque descriptos, vel uncialibus, ut vulgo aiunt, litteris, onera magis exarata, quam codices: dummodo mihi, meisque permittant pauperes habere schedulas, et non tam pulchros codices, quam emendatos. Utraque editio, et Septuaginta iuxta Graecos, et mea iuxta Hebraeos, in Latinum meo labore translata est. Eligat unusquisque quod vult: et studiosum me magis, quam malevolum probet.

was its most important proponent in the Latin tradition.<sup>965</sup> Recent scholarship has also shown that although Jerome's 'compelling self-portraiture as a solitary anchorite captured the imaginations of Italian Renaissance artists', his literary and scholarly efforts would have been impossible without the material support of a large community of scribes, scholars and assistants, and that his life was anything but solitary.<sup>966</sup>

Erasmus' debt to Jerome is well-known and he acknowledged it with enthusiasm. In two of his introductory texts to the 1516 Froben *New Testament* called the *Apologia* (*Apology*) and the *Methodus* (*Method*), Erasmus avowed these debts, praised Jerome's corrections, scorned 'Scotists' and claimed that he was glad to suffer rebuke on account of his commentaries for the 1516 Froben *New Testament*: 'I prefer to be a pious theologian along with Jerome than to be left at peace in the company of Scotus.'<sup>967</sup> Valla and Erasmus both believed that they were working within and improving upon the tradition of Jerome's corrections to and explanations of the Bible. In order to justify this work, in his foreword to the *Annotationes*, Valla first cited a lengthy passage from Jerome's own foreword to the Four Gospels addressed to Damasus, in which Jerome explained and justified his undertaking to correct the Latin translation of the Greek scriptures, supposedly at Damasus' command.<sup>968</sup> With respectful caution, Valla offered critiques of Jerome's ideas in the text to follow this citation, but nonetheless he clearly wished to associate his Biblical scholarship with Jerome's

<sup>965</sup> For a recent summary and treatment of Jerome and the *Hebraica veritas*, see Edmon Louis Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture in Patristic Biblical Theory: Canon, Language, Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>966</sup> See Cain, *Letters of Jerome*, 41.

<sup>967</sup> See *Methodus* in the 1516 Froben *New Testament* (pages not marked, but found at beginning of edition, after the *Paraclesis*): Denique malim cum Hieronymo pius esse theologus, quam cum Scoto invictus. In the *Apology* that follows the *Method* Erasmus repeated the idea that Jerome was widely criticized for his own changes to scripture and that he was glad to follow in Jerome's footsteps: Quaesio quid periculi consecutum est, quod sanctus Hieronymus vetus et novum instrumentum mundo iam senescenti, ad hebraeam et graecam veritatem instauravit? Reclamatum est tum a nonnullis, quibus ipse suis libris abunde satisfacit, nec ob aliud opinor reclamatum, nisi quod nescirent eas literas. Speaking of his own corrections Erasmus writes: Sed cur haec pluribus ago? Cum divus Hieronymus compluribus epistolis huius causae patronum agat, qui nec ipse, cum in re non ita dissimili laborasset, calumnia caruit. Cuius emendatio si extaret, aut non fuisset nobis hoc laboris capiundum, aut fuisset quod sequeremur...

<sup>968</sup> For the Latin text and the English translation see Celenza, 'Lorenzo Valla's Radical Philology', 22-23; 28-29.

precedent, offering an unmistakable parallel when he addressed his own *Foreword* to Pope Nicholas V and mentioned that he was following in Jerome's footsteps, who had addressed and dedicated his work on the Gospels to Nicholas V's forebear, Pope Damasus.<sup>969</sup>

As for Jerome's importance to Maniacutia, Peri has correctly remarked that 'without the writings of Jerome, Nicholas [Maniacutia] would not have been thinkable'.<sup>970</sup> In the *Libellus* Maniacutia cited widely from the Church Fathers and most of all from Jerome,<sup>971</sup> many of whose works he brought up in his critical commentaries as well as in his biography of the saint.<sup>972</sup> According to Peri, 'all of Maniacutia's principles and interests in Biblical criticism...go back to [Jerome] and find precedents and cultural justification in his writings'.<sup>973</sup> Maniacutia often compared his work with Jerome's, as when he corrected grammatical mistakes in the Psalms. 'Some might say the sacred text should not be subordinated to grammarians' rules (*grammaticorum regulis*)', wrote Maniacutia. 'I say likewise. Nonetheless, with Jerome as my teacher (*Hieronymo docente*), I have learnt that no one is forced to translate something incorrectly.'<sup>974</sup> As for correcting texts according to the *Hebraica veritas*, Maniacutia stated that when confronted with conflicting texts, he followed 'Jerome's command' (*Hieronymi mandatum*) and chose whatever text corresponded most closely to the Hebrew.<sup>975</sup> In his *Libellus* as well as in his other works, Maniacutia took phrases from Jerome's writings in order to describe corrupted or problematic passages,<sup>976</sup> and

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<sup>969</sup> See Celenza, 'Valla's Radical Philology', 27-28.

<sup>970</sup> Peri, 'Maniacutia', 77.

<sup>971</sup> See Peri, 'Correctores', 110.

<sup>972</sup> For a list of all of the many works of Jerome cited in the *Beati Hieronymi Vita*, see Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 186-187. See Linde, 'Einleitung', xxii-xxiv.

<sup>973</sup> Peri, 'Maniacutia', 75. See pages 74-79 for Peri's treatment of Jerome's importance to Maniacutia.

<sup>974</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 91: Vide falsitatem: gerundiva enim verborum, quae a caeteris non construuntur, construi nec ipsa solent. Dicit aliquis divinam paginam grammaticorum regulis minime subiacere; dico et ego idem. Et tamen Hieronymo docente didici quia nemo corrupte transferre cogitur.

<sup>975</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 97: Ego vero in eiusmodi proprium non sequar arbitrium, sed Hieronymi mandatum attendens, id in diversitatibus eligam quod vel ipsum expresse respondet Hebraicum vel eius sensui amplius appropinquat.

<sup>976</sup> Peri, 'Testimone', 74-79.

his extensive citations of Jerome show that he knew and understood Jerome's philological principles as competently as the humanist scholars who prized and drew from Jerome's Biblical scholarship centuries later.<sup>977</sup> Cornelia Linde has also shown that Maniacutia, copying almost directly from Hugh of Saint Victor's *De sacramentis Christianae fidei* (*On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*), included the Church Fathers' works in his tri-partite list of the New Testament as forming a kind of 'third *ordo* of the New Testament after the Gospels and the *apostolica volumina*'.<sup>978</sup> Although Maniacutia did not accept wholesale Hugh's inclusion of the Fathers in the New Testament, his respect for the Fathers was nonetheless remarkable.<sup>979</sup> In his *Suffraganeus*, Maniacutia also showed a thorough knowledge of other Mediaeval Christian scholars and he cited widely from two Jewish exegetes, Rashi and Abraham ibn Esra.<sup>980</sup> In seeking out Jewish teachers and scholars, Maniacutia followed Jerome's example more closely than Erasmus and most other Renaissance humanists ever did.

Classical scholars such as Quintilian and Church Fathers such as Jerome made up the foundations of a 'culture of correction' passed on from generation to Christian generation, all of which shared concerns and vocabulary and built upon their forebears' achievements, wittingly or not. Erasmus and other humanists recognized that the foundations of their own efforts of textual criticism stretched back to Carolingian times,<sup>981</sup> when scribes and scholars such as Lupus of Ferrières passed on Classical and Patristic texts in conditions that were

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<sup>977</sup> Peri, 'Correctores', 110.

<sup>978</sup> See Linde, 'Some Observations', 165. See notes 28-29.

<sup>979</sup> For more examples of admiration and use of the Fathers from the ninth to the twelfth century see Joseph de Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XIIe siècle* (Paris: Victor Lecroffe, 1914), 320-322.

<sup>980</sup> Linde, 'Einleitung', xxiv-xxvi.; See Peri, 'Correctores', 111, where Maniacutia cited a contemporary treatise on accents. See Peri, 'Correctores', 111-112 for Maniacutia's very detailed, lengthy explanation of how different accentuation could lead to corruption.

<sup>981</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 159-162.



anything but ideal.<sup>982</sup> Although we should neither exaggerate their rigour nor forcefully read into their works evidence of ‘modern’ textual criticism, from the times Alcuin of York to those of the remarkable thirteenth-century scholar Roger Bacon, scribes, scholars and editors, according to their understanding, did try to pass along ‘correct’ texts to their heirs and were not indifferent to and unaware of textual corruption.<sup>983</sup> In his introductory letter to Valla’s *Annotations*, Erasmus defended Valla against former and present slanderers by first appealing to the precedent of the great Mediaeval exegete Nicholas of Lyra, whose famous *Postilla* Erasmus used widely for his own Biblical commentaries.<sup>984</sup> He asked his readers:

Yet if we listen to Nicholas of Lyra, who is, I will not say unscholarly, but undoubtedly modern, who patronizes Jerome as a dotard and carps at a number of things now hallowed by the consensus of many ages, using moreover the Hebrew texts (and even if we allow these to be the source of the current version, still I suspect them of deliberate corruption), tell me what is so shocking about Valla’s action in making a few annotations on the New Testament after comparing several old and good Greek manuscripts.<sup>985</sup>

Erasmus insisted that ‘when Lyra discusses the meaning of a word he is surely acting as a grammarian rather than a theologian’ and that ‘the whole business of translating the Holy Scripture is manifestly a grammarian’s function’.<sup>986</sup> If Erasmus had ever read Maniacutia’s work, I believe that he too would have considered his efforts in the *Libellus*, the *Suffraganeus* and elsewhere as those of a grammarian, whose help was ‘indispensable’ for the queen of all

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<sup>982</sup> See *Scribes and Scholars*, 102-106. See Robert J. Gariépy, ‘Lupus of Ferrières: Carolingian Scribe and Text Critic’, in *Mediaeval Studies* 30 (1968): 91.

<sup>983</sup> See Hans Hermann Glunz, *History of the Vulgate in England from Alcuin to Roger Bacon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 14; 123.

<sup>984</sup> See the appendix to the 1519 Froben *Annotations* for many entries about Nicholas of Lyra.

<sup>985</sup> Allen 182, 116-125: Nicolaus Lyra auditur, non dico indoctus, sed certe recens, Hieronymum γερονταγωγῶν multaque convellens tot iam saeculorum consensu consecrata, idque ex Iudaeorum libris (unde ut donemus nostram hanc manare editionem, tamen haud scio an studio depravatis); quod tandem flagitium est, si Laurentius collatis aliquot vetustis atque emendatis Graecorum exemplaribus quaedam annotavit in Novo Testamento, quod sine controversia totum ab illorum fontibus manat, quae vel dissonent, vel dormitante interprete parum commode reddita videantur, vel quae significantius ab illis dicantur; postremo si quid apud nos depravatum appareat? An dicent non idem esse iuris Vallae grammatico quod Nicolao theologo?

<sup>986</sup> Allen 182, 126-131: Ut ne respondeam interim Laurentium a magnis viris inter philosophos quoque ac theologos referri, Lyra cum vocem excutit, num theologi ac non magis grammatici vices agit? Immo totum hoc, divinas vertere scripturas, grammatici videlicet partes sunt? Neque vero absurdum si quibusdam in rebus plus sapit lethro quam Moyses.

the sciences – theology.<sup>987</sup> Erasmus, for example, greatly admired Valla's commentaries on the Psalms in his *Annotations*,<sup>988</sup> and some of these are mirror-images of remarks that we find in the *Libellus*. Peri believed that we can 'legitimately underline persistence in the study of the genuine sacred text, which connects...the origins, the method and the vocabulary of every worthy and renewed re-affirmation of Western philology: in the fourth and in the twelfth, in the fifteenth and in the nineteenth century'.<sup>989</sup> Whatever exaggeration we might find in this argument, we cannot deny that it is grounded in considerable evidence drawn from contemporary sources. When Salutati railed against the work of bad editors and scribes by juxtaposing the words 'correction' and 'corruption',<sup>990</sup> he was, wittingly or not, following in Maniacutia's footsteps.<sup>991</sup> Valla made this same juxtaposition in his *Annotations* when he wrote that a passage in Luke 1 had 'been not corrected, but corrupted by some men who twisted others' words according to their own judgement'.<sup>992</sup> As we turn to look at Erasmus' work with the great Italian printer Aldus Manutius, we should understand that even before the printing press changed forever European letters, the culture and the vocabulary of textual criticism was already something well developed and widespread among European scribes and scholars. It would now be brought over to the new world of the printed book.

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<sup>987</sup> Allen 182, 132-140. Erasmus, for example, greatly admired Valla's commentaries on the Psalms in his *Annotations*, and some of these are mirror-images of remarks that we find in Maniacutia's *Libellus*. See Allen 182, 24-29.

<sup>988</sup> Allen 182, 24-29.

<sup>989</sup> Peri, 'Testimone', 90.

<sup>990</sup> Salutati, *De fato et fortuna*, 49, lines 95-100.

<sup>991</sup> See note 122 above.

<sup>992</sup> 1526 *Annotationes*, page 100 (Luke 1): Quae cum audisset, turbata est in sermone eius.) melius in quibusdam vetustis codicibus legitur, quae cum vidisset ἰδοῦσα, quod a quibusdam, aliorum scripta ad suum sensum trahentibus non correctum, sed corruptum est.

## PART II: CHAPTER IX

### ERASMUS' 'APPRENTICESHIP' IN VENICE

Erasmus addressed all three of his 1515 press-campaign letters promoting the 1516 Jerome *Edition* to Italian churchmen whose acquaintance and friendship he had made during his stay in Italy from early June 1506 until summer 1509.<sup>993</sup> He was about forty years old when he undertook to supervise the two sons of Giovanni Battista Boerio,<sup>994</sup> the Genovese court-physician of Henry VII, as they left to survey Italy's universities.<sup>995</sup> Soon after arriving in Italy, Erasmus got his doctorate in theology in a whirlwind from the University of Turin on 4 September 1506, after spending fifteen to twenty days at this university and passing an oral examination.<sup>996</sup> To take a doctorate in theology was not a common step for early sixteenth-century humanists, and Erasmus felt the need to justify this step in letters to his humanist friends and to Servatius Roger, friend of his youth and now prior of Erasmus' monastery at Steyn, from which he had already been absent for about a decade.<sup>997</sup> By taking a doctorate he clearly wished to increase his respectability as a scholar.<sup>998</sup> After this short stay in Turin, Erasmus sped off by way of Florence, where Machiavelli was busy at work for the Republic, to Bologna. In this old university town Erasmus befriended and lived for several months with the renowned Greek scholar Paolo Bombasio.<sup>999</sup> After the flight of Bologna's aged tyrant,

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<sup>993</sup> See Richard Newald, *Erasmus Roterodamus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), 83-93. Delio Cantimori, 'Note su Erasmo e l'Italie', in *Studi Germanici* 2 (1937): 146.

<sup>994</sup> See Beatus Rhenanus' letter to Charles V at the beginning of the 1540 edition of Erasmus' *Opera omnia*, page 59, lines 97-106.

<sup>995</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Erasmus of Rotterdam* (London: Phaidon Press, 1952), 60. See also Edward Tatham, 'Erasmus in Italy', in *The English Historical Review* 40 (1895): 642-645.

<sup>996</sup> For more information see Paul F. Grendler, 'How to Get a Degree in Fifteen Days: Erasmus' Doctorate of Theology from the University of Turin', in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 18 (1998): 40-69.

<sup>997</sup> Allen 200, 8-10. Allen 201, 4-6. Allen 203, 1-6.

<sup>998</sup> See his 1501 letter to a potential sponsor, Anne of Borssele, in Allen 145, 105-124.

<sup>999</sup> Albert Rabil Jr., 'Desiderius Erasmus', in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, volume 2, ed. Albert Rabil Jr. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 231.

Giovanni il Bentivoglio, on 10 November 1507 Erasmus was on hand to witness the triumphal procession of Pope Julius II into the city.<sup>1000</sup> From Bologna Erasmus began his correspondence with Aldus Manutius in late 1507, writing to him a very polite letter. He first praised Aldus' 'Herculean labours' that had already made the Bassiano-born humanist and printer famous and beloved for all time among those devoted to the study of sacred letters.<sup>1001</sup> He kindly asked Aldus to print his Latin translations of Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia* into Latin verse and praised the beauty of the Aldine type: 'I should consider that my efforts were given immortality if they were to be published in your type, especially that small fount which is the most elegant of all.'<sup>1002</sup> To my knowledge, this is the first sure evidence that we have of Erasmus' interest in the beauty and in the importance of founts, one that he kept and developed throughout his later career.<sup>1003</sup> He was not content with the Parisian printer Josse Bade's edition of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia* that had just come out in 1506, whose text he had edited. In a well-turned phrase that both gracefully appealed to Aldus' business sense and announced his own scholarly rigour, Erasmus complained that although Bade was happy about this edition's quick sales, it was nonetheless 'chock-full of errors'. He expressed his fear that despite Bade's wish to put out a better edition, 'he may seek "to ill the remedy with further ill"', in Sophocles' words'.<sup>1004</sup>

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<sup>1000</sup> Huizinga, *Erasmus*, 62.

<sup>1001</sup> See Allen 207, 5-13.

<sup>1002</sup> Manlio Dazzi, *Aldo Manuzio e il dialogo veneziano di Erasmo* (Vicenza: N. Pozza, 1969), 23. Allen 207, 31-34: Existimarim lucubrationes meas immortalitate donatas, si tuis excusae formulis in lucem exierint, maxime minutioribus illis omnium nitidissimis. Ita fiet ut volumen sit perpussilum, et exiguo sumptu res conficiatur.

<sup>1003</sup> Karine Crousaz, *Érasme et le pouvoir de l'imprimerie* (Lausanne: Éditions Antipodes, 2005), 44-46. Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 93. Victor Scholderer, 'Some Notes on Erasmus and his Printers', in *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* 37 (1962): 195-197. See Allen 2062; Allen 2063; BWBR 261; AK 1162; AK 1163.

<sup>1004</sup> Allen 207, 26-31: Badius impressit sibi sat foeliciter, ut scribit; nam ex animi sententia divididit exemplaria iam omnia. Verum non satis consultum est famae meae, usque adeo mendis scatent omnia, atque offert quidem ille operam suam ut superiorem editionem posteriore resarciat. Sed vereor ne iuxta Sophocleum adagium malum malo sarciat. For more on Erasmus' work with Bade, see Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 69-88.

Aldus agreed to print this edition, and for this task Erasmus worked by correspondence from Bologna.<sup>1005</sup> In his correspondence with Aldus, Erasmus estimated that to revise the text of the 1506 *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia* edition would take about ten days, a telling example of the speed at which many contemporary editors worked as well as their use of prior editions for their base-texts.<sup>1006</sup> Erasmus also claimed that he was ready to leave Italy about this time.<sup>1007</sup> He may have done this in order to convince Aldus to pay for at least some of this edition's publication, since it was customary at this time for aspiring authors to put up money as a security for publication.<sup>1008</sup> This first collaboration with Aldus eventually brought Erasmus to his press at Venice in early 1508. For the next ten or so months Erasmus worked at the Aldine press and lived with Aldus' father-in-law, the well-to-do and supposedly hard-nosed Andrea Torresani.<sup>1009</sup> During this time Aldus, his editorial team, his many learned friends and Erasmus worked together in order to create and to print a vastly expanded edition of Erasmus' *Adages*.<sup>1010</sup> This new edition contained, according to Alexander Vanautgaerden's count, 3285 entries instead of the 838 entries found in the first 1500 Parisian edition.<sup>1011</sup> What is more, this edition included two detailed indexes in order to help the reader negotiate through its over two kilogrammes of learning.<sup>1012</sup> A treasure-trove of Classical texts and an immediate international blockbuster, in short order the 1508 Aldine

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<sup>1005</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 107-108.

<sup>1006</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 107. See also Allen 207, 40: Est autem vix decem dierum negotium.

<sup>1007</sup> Allen 207, 38-40.

<sup>1008</sup> Reuchlin had to do with the Amerbach press in 1506 in order to have his *De rudimentis Hebraicis* (Hebrew Basics) printed. See Crousaz, *Pouvoir*, 47-52. For Reuchlin's own words see RBW 163, 20-28. For more on Reuchlin's *De rudimentis Hebraicis* and its printing with John Amerbach, see BWBR 143; 156; 163; 167; 172-174; 186; 207.

<sup>1009</sup> Augustin Renaudet, *Érasme et l'Italie* (Genève: E. Droz, 1954), 83. For more information on Torresani see Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 77. Here it is worth recording that Aldus' first house was not that now bedecked with various inscriptions, but rather another now bearing the number 2343 (2038) in Venice's San Polo neighbourhood. See Carol Castellani, *La stampa in Venezia dalla sua origine alla morte di Aldo Manuzio seniore* (Venezia: F. Ongania, 1889), 54-56.

<sup>1010</sup> It grew from 836 entries in Erasmus' *Collectanea* to 3260 entries in the Aldine edition. See Margolin, 'Fêtes vénitiennes', 18-19.

<sup>1011</sup> See Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 151.

<sup>1012</sup> Renaudet, *Érasme et l'Italie*, 86. On the title-page of the 1508 *Adages* we read: Praeponitur hisce adagiis duplex index. Alter secundum literas alphabeti nostri na quae graeca sunt latina quoque habentur. Alter per capita rerum.

edition of Erasmus' *Adages* catapulted Erasmus from relative obscurity to European fame.<sup>1013</sup> In addition to many other scholars, Pierre de Nolhac, Augustin Renaudet and, most recently, Alexandre Vanautgaerden have all treated in detail Erasmus' sojourn in Italy.<sup>1014</sup> This chapter aims not to tell again the story of Erasmus' years in Italy but rather to look more closely at the idea that Erasmus' ten or so months in Venice at Aldus' household and printing press were an important 'apprenticeship' for his later work at Basel.<sup>1015</sup> In order to understand better Erasmus' development as an editor and his work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, we should have some knowledge of the specific editorial practices and innovations of the Aldine Press and of other contemporary Venetian printers as well as of the scholars with whom Erasmus worked while on the lagoons. Although Erasmus was middle-aged in 1508, this was a formative period in his development as a scholar and an editor.<sup>1016</sup>

When Erasmus first made his way to Venice in January 1508, it was a flourishing city at the height of its powers and the European capital of the printed book.<sup>1017</sup> Despite the crisis of the Venetian printing trade in 1472-1473, when a surfeit of Classical editions flooded the markets and brought ruin to many fledgling printers, as early as the 1480s Venice boasted more than fifty independent printers.<sup>1018</sup> By the century's end Venice had already hosted more than 150 presses that had printed more than 4000 editions.<sup>1019</sup> In the first decades of

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<sup>1013</sup> Dazzi, *Dialogo veneziano*, 100-101. See Susy Marcon and Marino Zorzi, *Aldo Manuzio e l'ambiente veneziano: 1494-1515* (Venezia: Il cardo, 1994), 41-42. See also Edward Tatham, 'Erasmus in Italy', in *The English Historical Review* 10 (1895): 658 (642-662). See also Pierre De Nolhac, *Érasme en Italie* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1898), 46-50. See Allen 569, 160-181; Allen 770, 10-25.

<sup>1014</sup> Renaudet, *Érasme et l'Italie*; De Nolhac, *Érasme en Italie*. See also many useful articles in *Erasmus, Venezia e la cultura padana nel '500*. Since evidence about Erasmus' travels and experiences during these years is relatively lacking, Vanautgaerden speculated that Erasmus destroyed on purpose many letters from these years which did not put him the best of lights. See Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 151-153.

<sup>1015</sup> Rabil, 'Desiderius Erasmus', 233. Margolin, 'Fêtes vénitiennes', 22.

<sup>1016</sup> Tocchi, *In officina Erasmi*, 24-31.

<sup>1017</sup> Margolin, 'Fêtes vénitiennes', 16. Tatham, 'Erasmus in Venice', 650. Dazzi, *Dialogo veneziano*, 15. Paul Grendler, *Aldus Manutius: Humanist, Teacher and Printer* (Providence, Rhode Island: The John Carter Brown Library, 1984), 5.

<sup>1018</sup> For more on this crisis and its effects see *Prefazioni*, lv-lxiii.

<sup>1019</sup> See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 7; 25.

printing, Venice dominated the market for religious and legal books throughout Europe, and its production of books towered over that of Paris, the second most productive printing centre in contemporary Europe.<sup>1020</sup> It is true that Rome, where Sweynheim and Pannartz put out an amazing range of Classical and Patristic editions from 1468 until 1472, was the first Italian city in which the printing-press made an important and lasting impact.<sup>1021</sup> Still, printing had come to Venice by 1469, and Martin Lowry may not exaggerate when he claims that Venice was ‘the first city in the world to feel the full impact of printing’ and to experience its revolutionary impact on human communication.<sup>1022</sup> Contemporary Venetian printers contributed to an explosion in the number of Classical and of Christian texts available to readers, and by 1508 Aldus was Europe’s most famous and sought-after printer, with contacts, admirers, correspondents and contributors, wanted and unwanted, throughout the continent.<sup>1023</sup> In 1508, Erasmus therefore began work not only at the European capital of printing, but also with the captain of European printers.

Before stepping into this environment, it is not clear what experience, if any, Erasmus had working as an editor at an actual printing press. Although his surviving letters to Aldus show that he was concerned with the fount and the presentation of the 1507 Aldine *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia* edition, we do not see in them the expertise that Erasmus’ later letters to colleagues associated with the Froben press show.<sup>1024</sup> At Venice, for the first extended period Erasmus was able to work in continued and close proximity with the printers, editors and scholars at Aldus’ printing-shop where conditions resembled, to use Lowry’s words, ‘a now almost incredible mixture of the sweat-shop, the boarding house and the research

<sup>1020</sup> See also Martin Davies, *Aldus Manutius* (Malibu, California: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1995), 7-9.

<sup>1021</sup> See *Prefazioni*, xi-xvi.; For a brief history of the spread of the printing-press in Italy, see Colin Clair, *A History of European Printing* (London, New York: Academic Press, 1976), 37-58.

<sup>1022</sup> See Marcon and Zorzi, eds. *Aldo Manuzio e l’ambiente veneziano*, 13-14. Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 8.

<sup>1023</sup> Dazzi, *Dialogo Veneziano*, 28.

<sup>1024</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 107-108.

institute'.<sup>1025</sup> Unhappy with the work of his printers before 1508,<sup>1026</sup> at the Aldine press Erasmus found what was needed in order to make the kind of book he had envisaged: 'important financial backing, a team of correctors to help him in his research, a workshop ceaselessly able to draw from one of from several large libraries and, last, a strong identity in the humanist republic of letters thanks to its director.'<sup>1027</sup> Vanautgaerden has pointed out that when looking at Erasmus' first printed text, his introduction to Robert Gaguin's *De origine et gestis Francorum compendium* (*Compendium about the Origins and Deeds of the Franks*), side-by-side with one of his last edited works such as *Ecclesiastes*, even uninitiated readers can remark that the printed book had undergone a revolution over Erasmus' lifetime.<sup>1028</sup> Aldus died in 1515,<sup>1029</sup> but in later letters to Andrea Torresani's son Gianfrancesco, Erasmus emphasized the great debt that he felt towards Aldus and to his printing press: 'I have always relied on the services of Froben, since I found no one who was more suitable. But I feel the same enthusiasm for your press as for literature itself, about which my feelings are very strong indeed, and literature owes more to your press than to anyone else.'<sup>1030</sup> Despite many false starts that continued into the 1520s, Erasmus never again printed with the Aldine press after 1509.<sup>1031</sup> He remarked, however, in the foreword to the 1526 Froben edition of his *Adages* that Froben, 'if not with the same success then surely with no less diligence', was trying to bring to light ancient Greek writers after Aldus' example.<sup>1032</sup> His highest praise of

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<sup>1025</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 94.

<sup>1026</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 5.

<sup>1027</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 3.

<sup>1028</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 1.

<sup>1029</sup> Davies, *Aldus*, 62.

<sup>1030</sup> Allen 1628, 1-12: S. P. Scripsi pridem respondens tuis litteris. Adagiorum opus excudit Frobenius. Exemplar recipiet Carolus idem qui pertulit, ut faciat quod iussi. Galenus vehementer expectatur ab eruditibus. Ego, mi Francisce, hactenus usus sum opera Frobenii, quod alius nemo contigit magis commodus. Alioquin officinae vestre non minus faveo quam bonis litteris, quibus profecto faveo plurimum, et hae vestre officinae tantum debent quantum alii nemini. Si quid erit in quo potero declarare hunc animum, faciam ut intelligas hec non esse λόγους. Salutabis mihi diligenter patrem Asulanum et fratrem reliquamque familiam. Baptiste medico scribam, si quid dabitur oculi. Bene vale.

<sup>1031</sup> See Allen 1623.

<sup>1032</sup> Allen 1659, 72-77: Et Aldinae quidem officinae non omnino maligne respondit publicus orbis favor, quae praeter tot egregios scriptores nunc nobis parturit omnes Galeni libros Graecos; Ioannes Frobenius cum idem



Aldus' work is found in his *Adages*, in which he set Aldus' glory above Ptolemy's immortal fame and remarked that 'even though Aldus' library was held within the walls of a little house, he built up a library whose only boundaries will be the world itself'.<sup>1033</sup> Erasmus wished to further Aldus' undertaking to spread good letters and Classical learning to the farthest reaches of the world.<sup>1034</sup> In his friend Thomas More's *Utopia*, it was through Aldus' editions that Raphael Hythlodaye brought Greek learning to the Utopians, and it was with these editions as their models that the Utopians learnt to make their own printing-presses and spread Greek books throughout their territories.<sup>1035</sup>

Aldus showed great care for the physical beauty of his Latin and Greek founts, even if most readers today find them challenging to read.<sup>1036</sup> In their introduction to the exhibition catalogue *In Aedibus Aldi*, its editors claimed, perhaps with some exaggeration but not without reason, that Aldus' 'lasting fame is more a product of his typographic innovations than his scholarly contributions'.<sup>1037</sup> Such fame did not come without a price. From his first days as a printer in the 1490s, Aldus had spent much time, effort and considerable sums of money in order to develop his famous founts, including his first working Greek founts.<sup>1038</sup> He paid Francesco Griffo dearly to cut his famous Latin and Greek italic founts, which followed and built on the fashionable styles of Italian humanist manuscripts.<sup>1039</sup> Once these fonts were

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moliatur apud Germanos, si non pari successu, certe non dispari studio, praeter famam invidia vitiata haud ita multum metit e suis laboribus. See Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 263-276.

<sup>1033</sup> ASD II-3, 272-275: Postremo quondam principum hoc munus erat, inter quos praecipua Ptolemaei gloria; quanquam huius bibliotheca domesticis et angustis parietibus continebatur, Aldus bibliothecam molitur, cuius non alia septa sint, quam ipsius orbis.

<sup>1034</sup> See Hanan Yoran, *Between Utopia and Dystopia: Erasmus, Thomas More and the Humanist Republic of Letters* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010).

<sup>1035</sup> See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 258. See *The Complete Works of Thomas More*, volume 4, eds. Edward Surtz and J. H. Hexter (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1965), 182: Ex poetis habent Aristophanem, Homerum, atque Euripidem; tum Sophoclem minusculis Aldi formulis. See also pages 182-183.

<sup>1036</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 129-131. Clair, *European Printing*, 144-147.

<sup>1037</sup> See Paul J. Angerhofer, Mary Ann Addy Maxwell et al., eds. *In Aedibus Aldi: the Legacy of Aldus Manutius and His Press* (Provo, Utah: Friends of the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, 1995), 3.

<sup>1038</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 72; 86-92.

<sup>1039</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 99; 130-141.

ready in the early 1500s, Aldus pursued ‘no less than six copyrights from the Venetian senate and three successive popes’ in order to protect them from forgers and fakers.<sup>1040</sup> Many contemporaries shared Erasmus’ opinion that Aldus’ founts were among the most beautiful in the world,<sup>1041</sup> something confirmed in the bustling trade of counterfeit books at Lyon, whose printers produced at least fifty-nine fake Aldine editions between 1501 and 1526.<sup>1042</sup> In addition to his work with Latin editions, Aldus’ printing of Greek editions was probably his most remarkable achievement. Lowry concludes his revisionist account that is in many respects critical of Aldus by highlighting what he deems Aldus’ greatest accomplishment: ‘...nothing can take from Aldus the credit for his Greek first editions, and he has received far less recognition than he deserves for the pains which they must have cost him.’<sup>1043</sup> It is hard not to share Erasmus’ belief that such efforts were ‘Herculean’ when we read about the intricate problems of creating a Greek font to which Aldus had to attend amidst the pressures of a taxing business enterprise involving partners of high social rank and great wealth.<sup>1044</sup> In his foreword to the 1513 edition of Plato’s works, addressed to the newly installed Leo X, Aldus claimed: ‘I have not published one book that satisfied me. For such is my love of good letters, I want my books, which I put in the hands of the learned, to be most correct and most beautiful.’<sup>1045</sup> All rhetoric aside, Aldus’ aesthetic standards were without any doubt exacting and demanding, and he was willing to pay for them.<sup>1046</sup>

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<sup>1040</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 301. In *Aedibus Aldi*, 34-35. In his later career with Froben Erasmus too would show great concern for ‘intellectual property’. On the *verso* side of the 1516 *Edition*’s title folio-page we see two separate copyrights that Leo X and Emperor Maximilian I had granted to the Froben editors for the *Edition*. For more information on Erasmus’ efforts to defend his work see Crousaz, *Pouvoir*, 89-114.

<sup>1041</sup> Allen 207, 31-33: Existimarim lucubrationes meas immortalitate donatas, si tuis excusae formulis in lucem exierint, maxime minutioribus illis omnium nitidissimis.

<sup>1042</sup> See *In Aedibus Aldi*, 2. Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 130.

<sup>1043</sup> Lowry, *World of Manutius*, 304.

<sup>1044</sup> See *In Aedibus Aldi*, 27-35 for detailed information about Aldus’ Greek fonts. For more on the underwriters of Aldus and of other contemporary printers see Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 16-23; 76-86; 304.

<sup>1045</sup> For the full foreword, entitled *Aldi Pii Manutii ad Leonem X pontificem maximum pro republica Christiana proque re literaria supplicatio* in Giovanni Orlandi, ed. *Aldo Manuzio Editore*, volume 1 (Milano: Il polifilo, 1975), 120-123. On page 122 Aldus writes of his editorial work: Ego autem iamdiu hoc saxum volvo. Qua in re mihi quidem videor esse alter Sisyphus, quod nondum illud volvendo perduxerim in apicem montis, aliis autem, iisque eruditis, Hercules, quod, nullis cedens malis, nullis succumbens laboribus, iam plus unus ipse

At Venice Erasmus saw first-hand what infrastructure, tact and determination it took Aldus to make the Greek and Latin editions to which he tried to live up during the more than twenty years he spent working with the Frobens from 1516 until his death in 1536. Like Aldus, throughout his later career Erasmus showed his great concern for the physical beauty of the printed book.<sup>1047</sup> In his press-campaign letter to Cardinal Grimani, Erasmus promised that the 1516 *Edition* was ‘being printed (or rather, being reborn) in most elegant type’, and at great cost.<sup>1048</sup> In his foreword to the 1524-26 Froben Jerome edition addressed to Warham, Erasmus remarked that notwithstanding the enormous pains taken in order to make the 1516 *Edition* as accurate and as pleasing to the eye as possible, with this later edition he and his colleagues at the Froben press had done yet more:

Although such trouble had been taken over the first edition, o prelate beyond compare, that one could scarcely hope for any possible addition from those second thoughts which are proverbially the best, yet in my great desire to render this work...as perfect and complete as possible, I have arranged for it to be reprinted separately with more elegant paper and types; though Johannes Froben had already given such an account of himself in the printing of Jerome that he had not only by common consent surpassed everyone else, but he had left very little scope for improving on his own performance.<sup>1049</sup>

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iuverim rem literariam, quam simul omnes, quotquot fuere multis seculis. Ita me amant de tantis laboribus, ut nunc coram nunc accuratis literis laudando obtundant. Sed non ego credulus illis: nullum enim adhuc dedi librum, in quo mihi satisfecerim. Nam tanta erga bonas literas benevolentia est mea, ut emendatissimos simul et pulcherrimos esse cupiam libros, quos emittam in manus studiosorum.

<sup>1046</sup> See *Aldo Manuzio editore* 1, 122: Quamobrem, quotiescunque vel mea vel eorum incuria, qui mecum corrigendis libris incumbunt, aliquo in libro quamvis parvus error committitur, etsi opere in magno fas est obrepere somnum – non enim unius diei labor hic noster, sed multorum annorum atque interim nec mora nec requies –, sic tamen doleo, ut, si possem, mutarem singula errata numo aureo.

<sup>1047</sup> Karine Crousaz, *Pouvoir*, 44. Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 93.

<sup>1048</sup> Allen 334, 130-133: Fervet ingens officina, excuditur elegantissimis formulis divus Hieronymus, imo renascitur, tantis impendiis et pecuniarum et sudorum ut minoris constiterit Hieronymo sua conscripsisse quam nobis restituisset.

<sup>1049</sup> Allen 1465, 1-12: Quanquam in prima aeditione sic advigilatum erat ut vix ulli spes esset posterioribus curis, quas proverbio dicunt meliores, quicquam adiungi posse, Praesul incomparabilis; tamen ego magnopere cupiens hoc opus, quod nomini tuo ceu monumentum, utinam victurum, erexeram, omnibus, quantum fieri posset, numeris absolutum exactumque reddere, curavi ut denuo separatim excuderetur et chartis et formulis elegantioribus: quanquam Ioannes Frobenius sic se gesserat antea in excudendo Hieronymo, ut non solum omnium suffragiis antecederet omnes, verum etiam vix ipse sibi locum relinqueret vincendi sui.

After the 1517 Froben edition of Chrysostom's works had been printed in 'that small type in which they printed Jerome's commentaries', as Beatus lamented to Erasmus,<sup>1050</sup> in his forward to the 1530 edition, Erasmus stressed that Chrysostom's works had been printed anew in costlier, larger characters and remarked that these characters were important for the ultimate reach and usefulness of the edition:

I shall not even write about how much majesty these volumes have gained owing to the large size of the pages and to the elegance and the quality of the founts, things which, even if they occasion printers almost unbelievable costs, bring no small charm to such a great doctor, and attract, through a kind of seduction, otherwise indifferent readers. These are exterior things, but I shall only admit that they are to be considered things of no importance if we also admit that crass habits, an unwashed face, uncombed hair do not take away from the charm of an agreeable body, and that certain cares and elegance in good taste do not at all add to it.<sup>1051</sup>

We cannot attribute this statement solely to Erasmus' desire to advertise this new edition, for we see such concern for printed editions' physical beauty in many other cases.<sup>1052</sup> To care about and to advertise 'beautiful founts' was common for printers well before Aldus,<sup>1053</sup> but in our surviving evidence Erasmus' concern for the beauty of type seems to have increased markedly during and after his stay at Venice.<sup>1054</sup> Already in the 1508 *Adages* Erasmus praised Aldus' efforts to create printed books as attractive as their content was useful and

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<sup>1050</sup> Allen 575, 35-43: Aedetur et Chrysostomus, sed minutis illis formulis quibus Hieronymianos commentarios impresserunt. O rem indignam! Exerces hic quoque ludum tuum, Fortuna, quemadmodum in reliquis mortalium rebus. Impostorum, nebulonum, fucorum libri felicissime excunduntur, eruditorum neglectissime. Quasi vero non satis sit, quantum ad vitae conditionem attinet, hos ut plurimum inferiores esse, at istos ubique prosperrimos, nisi in litterariis quoque monumentis tuam tyrannidem post fata sentire cogantur.

<sup>1051</sup> I translated this letter with the help of the French edition of the *Correspondence*, 2359, 32-43. For the Latin see Allen 2359, 24-34: Nec commemorabo quantum maiestatis accesserit voluminibus ex amplitudine chartarum, ex elegantia dignitateque formularum; quae res ut typographis vix credendis impendiis constant, ita doctori tam eximio non parum conciliant gratiae, et lectorem alioqui fastidiosum ceu lenocinio quodam invitant. Extraria sunt ista fateor, sed ea tum demum fatebor pro nihilo ducenda, si sordida vestis, illota facies, impexus capillus nihil obscurant bonae formae gratiam, sique nihil eam commendant cultus et honesta mundities.

<sup>1052</sup> See Allen 2062, 24-25; Allen 2412, 17-21.

<sup>1053</sup> See *Die Inkunablen (Klassik Stiftung Weimar)*, ed. Eva Raffel (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 74. Here we find Johannes Amerbach's advertisement to his 1481 edition of the Bible: Biblia latina caractere perpulchro in folio absque nomine loci et typographi MCCCCLXXXI.

<sup>1054</sup> See Allen 397, 1-4: Multum tuae debent industriae, mi Thoma, sed plus debent fidei, quicunque ubivis terrarum bonas amant coluntque literas; quibus tua officina laudatissimos autores suppeditat Latinis, Graecis et Hebraeis formulis excusos, et his quidem longe elegantissimis. See Allen 462, 6-9: Tuae partes erunt curare ut Frobenianis formulis maiusculis quam emendatissime simul et nitidissime rursus exeant in publicum; quo hac sane placeant, si eruditione parum commendantur lectori.

edifying.<sup>1055</sup> It was Froben's skilful imitation of Aldus' founts in his 1513 reprint of the *Adages*, moreover, that first caught Erasmus' attention in far-away England.<sup>1056</sup>

At the Aldine press Erasmus gained a deeper appreciation of indexes, tables of content and other 'paratextual' devices.<sup>1057</sup> On the title-page of the 1508 *Adages*, beneath his foreword to the reader and his anchor and dolphin device, Aldus advertised his paratextual additions meant to help the reader: 'To these adages a double-index is added. One is according to the letters of our [Latin] alphabet. Those that are in Greek are also listed under the [corresponding] Latin letters. The other index is according to the subject-matter.'<sup>1058</sup> Later in the 1508 *Adages*, Aldus included a short notice to the reader about these indexes in order to guide the reader.<sup>1059</sup> In other editions Aldus time and again brought up his efforts to make helpful paratexts and emphasized their importance. In a detailed foreword to his 1502 Latin grammar, Aldus wrote: 'You can find a most detailed index, and newly ordered, such that you might easily find whatever word you are seeking...And what is especially valuable, there is a large and empty margin, such that anyone that wishes can annotate something in the margins, as learned men are accustomed to do...'.<sup>1060</sup>

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<sup>1055</sup> See, for instance, the adage 'The Labours of Hercules' in ASD II-5, 23-41; translation in CWE 34, 167-182. See Vanautgaerden's discussion of this adage in *Typographie*, 147-150. Elsewhere abundant testimony of the great admiration that Erasmus had for Aldus' undertakings to edit and to publish Greek and Latin texts, admiration widely shared in the contemporary Republic of Letters. See, for example, Michael Hummelberg's 1513 letter to Bruno Amerbach in AK 482, 9-16.

<sup>1056</sup> Allen 283, 152-154: In negotio Proverbiorum pessime sum acceptus ab istis bibliopolis. Quidam ea formulis excudit Basileae, sed ita imitatus editionem Aldinam ut parum attentis eadem videri possit.

<sup>1057</sup> For Pabel's discussion of paratexts, see, to begin with, Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 11-16.

<sup>1058</sup> 1508 *Adages*, title-page: Praeponitur hisce adagiis duplex index. Alter secundum literas alphabeti nostri. Nam quae graeca sunt, latina quoque habentur. Alter per capita rerum.

<sup>1059</sup> Text quoted from Alexandre Vanautgaerden, 'L'index thématique des 'Adages' d'Érasme (1508-1536)', in *Les Instruments de travail à la Renaissance*, eds. Jean-François Gilmont and Alexandre Vanautgaerden (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 241-280: Erasmi Roterodami adagiorum chiliades tres, et centuriae fere totidem. Index secundum materias, in quo quaecumque adagia aliquo modo conveniunt, in unum locum reducuntur. Puta, quae ad liberalitatem faciunt, simul habentur, quae ad avaritiam, sub titulo avaritiae, et sic in singulis generis eiusdem. Multorum autem adagiorum principia tantum posita sunt propter angustiam versiculorum.

<sup>1060</sup> See Aldus' introduction to his 1502 Latin Grammar, cited in G. Orlandi, *Aldo Manuzio editore*, 1, 29-30: Index copiosissimus, et novo ordine, quo facillime quodcunque queritur vocabulum, inveniri potest. Notatae enim sunt totius operis singulae semipaginae, ac singuli semipaginarum omnium versus, arithmeticis numeris.

Carlo Vecce claims that the creation of thorough paratextual reference-guides to his editions was ‘among the radical innovations that Aldus Manutius and his collaborators introduced into the world of the book towards the end of the fifteenth-century’.<sup>1061</sup> We should not overlook the detailed indexes and tables of contents found in many manuscripts and works printed before Aldus’ rise to fame, some of which we shall treat later in this thesis.<sup>1062</sup> Nonetheless, it is likely that before Aldus no one had included and experimented with tables of contents, indexes and other paratextual tools and additions ‘in the same systematic way in the printed book’.<sup>1063</sup> Aldus did not go to such trouble entirely out of the goodness of his heart, for indexes and other paratexts were important for his advertisement and sales. Erasmus later recounted that when he asked Aldus why he insisted on putting such an unwieldy index to his edition of John Craston’s *Dictionarium Graecum* (*Greek Dictionary*) Aldus replied that the prospect of having to compete with such a detailed index ‘frightened off possible rivals’.<sup>1064</sup>

Together Aldus and Erasmus undertook considerable work in order to make detailed, accurate and relatively user-friendly indexes for the 1508 *Adages*, which began on the *verso*

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Et quod operae pretium est, margine expedito et vacuo, ut possit, siquid libuerit, in margine, ut fieri adoctis assolet, annotari...Quo facilius noster hic inveniendorum vocabulorum index intelligatur, scito, carissime lector, primum numerum conclusum punctis semipaginae versum, et sic tertium, si quis fuerit, eiusdem semipaginae versum ostendere, donec ad ‘et’ coniunctionem pervenias: nam primus numerus post ‘et’ coniunctionem semipagina ostendit, secundus vero semipaginae versum, et sic tertius et quartus semipaginae versus demonstrant, si qui fuerint. Exempli gratia, ‘examen’ sic est in indice: ‘Examen .36.21.25. et .281.34’, hoc est: semipaginam trigesima sexta, versu vigesimo primo, versu vigesimo quinto, et semipagina ducentesima octogesima prima, versu 34, et sic in caeteris.

<sup>1061</sup> Carlo Vecce, ‘Aldo e l’invenzione dell’indice’, in *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance Culture* (Florence: Olschki 1994), 109.

<sup>1062</sup> Johannes Amerbach, for example, began printing long before Aldus, and his early editions show clear concern for good organization and some include noteworthy paratextual additions. For an interesting comparison of indexes in manuscripts and in early printed texts see Maria Gioia Tavoni, ‘Indici manoscritti in volumi a stampa’, in *Paratesto* 8 (2011), 9-22.

<sup>1063</sup> Carlo Vecce, ‘Aldo e l’invenzione dell’indice’, 109.

<sup>1064</sup> Allen 1460, 45-48: Aldus ipse, quondam a me rogatus cur indice tam operoso pariter et ocioso duxisset onerandum esse codicem, nihil aliud respondit quam hac difficultate deterritos fuisse aeditionis aemulos.

side of the edition's title-page and took up over twenty-seven folio pages.<sup>1065</sup> Among the many factors that helped to make the *Adages* such an immediately and widely popular compendium of Classical learning was the convenience and the exhaustiveness of its indexes.<sup>1066</sup> Erasmus followed Aldus' precedent when he published the next expanded and improved edition of his *Adages* with Froben in 1515, and he did this before taking up and finishing his work on the 1516 *Edition* and on the *New Testament*. He included in this new edition almost exact copies of Aldus' indexes.<sup>1067</sup> Vanautgaerden shows, moreover, that Erasmus substantially and carefully revised Aldus' notice to the reader for the 1515 Froben *Adages* and again for the 1528 Froben *Adages*.<sup>1068</sup> The 1516 Jerome *Edition* also included carefully made and thorough tables of content and indexes that betrayed Aldus' touch and set it apart from prior printed editions of Jerome's letters. From his analysis of Erasmus' presentation of the indexes made for the 1516 *Edition* and for later Froben editions of Jerome's letters, Dill concludes that the constant revision of these paratexts reflected their importance for the editions' sales, emphasizing that 'Froben and his competitors used the always new indexes as a selling-point'.<sup>1069</sup> In 1520 Froben published an entirely separate index to the 1516 Jerome *Edition* edited by Johannes Oecolampadius.<sup>1070</sup> For his 1524-1526 edition of Jerome's letters, Froben hired Pellikan to take charge of creating new indexes for Jerome's works and he advertised them on the edition's title-page: 'a new and re-worked index of subject-matter has been added. Take care, reader, such that it may be to my advantage to have undertaken so much work and to have gone to such expense.'<sup>1071</sup> On the

<sup>1065</sup> See Vecce, 'Indice', 131-134. Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 117.

<sup>1066</sup> Davies, *Aldus Manutius*, 58. See Vecce, 'Indice', 131-132.

<sup>1067</sup> Rabil, 'Desiderius Erasmus', 240. For more on the connection between the *Adages* and the 1516 *Edition*, see Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 31.

<sup>1068</sup> See Vanautgaerden, 'L'index thématique des 'Adages' d'Érasme', especially 249-280.

<sup>1069</sup> Dill I, 499-500.

<sup>1070</sup> Dill I, 501-503.

<sup>1071</sup> Dill I, 504-508. See the title-page to the 1524-1526 Froben edition of Jerome's letters: Sancti Hieronymi Lucubrationes omnes una cum pseudepigraphis, et alienis admixtis, in novem digestae tomos, sed multo quam ante vigilantius per Desiderium Erasmus Roterodamum emendatae, locis non paucis feliciter correctis,

verso side of the same folio Froben again advertised the re-arrangement of the letters and the new index.<sup>1072</sup> His use of paratexts as a ‘selling-point’ is unmistakable in his editions of Jerome and in many other texts, such as in Erasmus’ foreword to the 1518 Froben Suetonius edition.<sup>1073</sup>

How Aldus incorporated paratexts into his editions was perhaps as important as their size and detail. His editions of the Classics, for example, did not contain any of the popular marginal commentaries that often surrounded printed texts in the 1480s and the 1490s. Breaking with fashion, Aldus preferred instead to present ‘the unadorned words of the Classical master’.<sup>1074</sup> Aldus and Erasmus shared a similar vision of how to present paratexts, since both men disliked texts cluttered with commentaries and other paratextual additions. Froben’s 1515 edition of the *Praise of Folly* included marginal commentaries written by Gerard Listrius, and Erasmus himself wrote marginal comments for the 1518 Froben edition of More’s *Utopia*. These two editions are exceptions, however, to Froben’s preference to separate commentary from the text, especially remarkable after 1516.<sup>1075</sup> This preference could have been due in part to Erasmus’ input. In the 1516 Jerome *Edition*’s first four volumes, for which Erasmus was responsible, the *scholia* are separated and included before or after the text of the letters. This is in marked contrast to the 1516 *Edition*’s remaining five volumes, which Beatus, the Amerbach brothers and other scholars and correctors oversaw, and most of which had been printed before Erasmus’ arrival at Basel. In these volumes

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quibusdam etiam locupletatis, duntaxat in scholiis. Adiectus et index sententiarum novus et elaboratus. Cura lector, ut mihi sit faustum ac felix tantum laborum et impendiorum suscepisse. Erit autem, si thesaurum magno usui futurum libenter emeris. Basileae apud Ioannem Frobenium anno MDXXVI mense Februario.

<sup>1072</sup> 1524-1526 Froben edition, verso of title-page: ...Adiecimus novum et elaboratum indicem sententiarum, quem et ipsum adiungere cui commodum erit tomo licebit. Nam sunt quidam vix iusta magnitudine.

<sup>1073</sup> In this foreword Erasmus praised Aldus’ prior edition edited by his friend Giovanni Battista Egnazio but advertised his new index and the edition’s inclusion of Guillaume Budé’s observations taken from a separate edition as well as his own improvements. See Allen 648, 1-17; 59-64.

<sup>1074</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 217.

<sup>1075</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 95.



Jerome's commentaries surrounded the Biblical text after the traditional mould of contemporary editions of the Bible text and looked much like the 1497-1498 Venetian edition of Jerome's commentaries.<sup>1076</sup> Likewise the 1516 Froben *New Testament* marked a departure from most contemporary printed Bibles in that its commentaries are confined to a separate book, the *Annotations*. In general, we can remark that after Erasmus' first stay at Basel from 1514 to 1516, Froben began to separate commentaries from text. In addition to his preference for unadorned text, Erasmus also believed that the quality of paratexts was more important than quantity, something that seems to have been lost on many contemporary printers and maybe even on Aldus himself, at least at times. In his second surviving letter to Aldus, Erasmus already began discussing the index that Aldus had in mind for the 1507 edition of Euripides' *Hecuba* and of *Iphigenia*. Erasmus found it 'out of place for so small a volume to be swollen by so large an appendix', and instead suggested to Aldus a 'clean', more streamlined text.<sup>1077</sup> Years later, in his foreword to the 1524 Froben edition of Craston's *Dictionarium Graecum*, Erasmus criticized Aldus for the unwieldy index he put before this dictionary, which he thought 'as toilsome as it was useless'.<sup>1078</sup> Although commercial motives were doubtless at work here since Erasmus was promoting a new Froben edition of a dictionary already in print, in this example we can understand Erasmus' emphasis on the quality and the presentation of paratexts.

Dill has suggested that Erasmus may have taken from Aldus the idea of labelling his commentaries *scholia* in the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. In his editions of Nikander's *Theriaka* and *Alexipharmaka*, the *Tragedies* of Sophocles and Euripides' works, among others, Aldus used

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<sup>1076</sup> For an illustration of another prior Froben edition where commentaries were presented in this same way, see Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 287-301.

<sup>1077</sup> Allen 209, 36-40: Parum autem congruere videtur ut volumen tantillum tanta crescat appendice. Mihi videbitur elegantius si purum opus emittatur, et in presentia non adsunt mihi quos ad id desydero autores; proinde satius est non attingere rem quam parum scite id facere.

<sup>1078</sup> See Allen 1460, 38-40: Veterem indicem, qui verso dictionum ordine ex Latinis indicabat Graecas, omisimus velut inutilem ac nihil aliud quam onerantem volumen.

the Greek word *scholia* to mean ‘commentaries’.<sup>1079</sup> In his thorough investigation of this word and of Erasmus’ use of it, Dill concludes that it is possible that Erasmus first saw the word *scholia* used to mean ‘commentaries’ at Aldus’ printing house.<sup>1080</sup> What we do know for sure is that in contrast to other printers at the time, whose paratexts show remarkable consistency and reflect prior manuscript traditions, Aldus had radically changed the face of title pages and other introductory paratexts and ‘was one of the first printers to put an organic link between the title-page and the *mise en page* of the volume. The title became for him part of the whole and no longer merely a protective cover or an ornament’.<sup>1081</sup> As Vanautgaerden aptly summed up: ‘From the time of his formative stay with Aldus at Venice in 1508, Erasmus understood that a book was no longer simply a transposed manuscript.’ He came away from Venice with a better understanding that the printed book was ‘a complex object from which he drew the greatest profit by painstakingly analyzing its different components: the title page, forewords, other paratexts (marginal indications, index)...The book is considered as an organism whose exterior form (the *mise en page*) reflects the interior disposition (the ideas)’.<sup>1082</sup>

In letters in answer to Julius Caesar Scaliger’s 1531 *Oratio pro Cicerone contra Erasmum* (*Oration for Cicero against Erasmus*), Erasmus reacted with fury to the charge that he had worked at the Aldine press as a *lector*, the man who read copies aloud to correctors.<sup>1083</sup> Dismissing this job as the work of a ‘half-man’ (*officio semihominis*), Erasmus emphasized that he and Aldus had worked together as equals in order to create the

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<sup>1079</sup> Dill I, 96-97.

<sup>1080</sup> Dill I, 103. Dill I, 99. See Allen 273, 10-17.

<sup>1081</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 111. For more discussion of early developments in the title-page see Clair, *European Printing*, 112-115.

<sup>1082</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 5.

<sup>1083</sup> Allen 2581, 6-12: Ait me hic egisse ut extincta Ciceronis gloria ego pro Cicerone legerer; apud Aldum functum officio semihominis, id est lectoris; apud eundem nunquam surrexisse a mensa nisi ebrium, quum illic nec apponeretur quod posset inebriare, nec unquam vacaret indulgere vino; nunquam legisse Aristotelem, quum nullum sit opus illius unde non citem aliquid.

*Adages*.<sup>1084</sup> He even claimed that he had been ‘like a teacher’ to Aldus, which is quite implausible.<sup>1085</sup> In a 1533 letter Erasmus again insisted that he worked feverishly together with Aldus, simultaneously writing as the presses churned and reading only the penultimate copy of his work, after proof-readers had already corrected it, before handing it over to Aldus for final review and printing.<sup>1086</sup> Erasmus’ time at the Aldine press was a period of intense engagement as a writer and an editor in conditions that he had never before experienced. In the above examples we see that at Aldus’ press, ‘the process of criticism and emendation did not precede that of printing but advanced jerkily alongside it, step by alternating step’.<sup>1087</sup> Erasmus got used to working in this manner at Venice, in close co-ordination with printers and at the breath-taking speed that later characterized his work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1088</sup> Throughout the remainder of his career, and especially at the Froben press, Erasmus often worked under conditions in which ‘editing and printing often took place at the same time’.<sup>1089</sup> In his foreword to the second edition of his *Apologia adversus monachos quosdam hispanos* (*Apology Against Certain Spanish Monks*),<sup>1090</sup> Erasmus asked forgiveness for his many errors by pointing out his hasty editing:

Every day, dear reader, the truth of Horace’s advice becomes increasingly clear to me, that if we want a work of ours to survive us and be in everyone’s hands, we should hold it back until the ninth year. In this respect I admit I have sinned grievously, since in almost every case I have not so much published

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<sup>1084</sup> Allen 2577, 1-16.

<sup>1085</sup> See Allen 2577, 10-13: ...ut iam omittam, quod obiicit me Ciceronis gloriam velle abolere, quod temulentiam, quum longe aliud sciant qui mecum vivunt, quod apud Aldum lectoris officio sim functus, cum Aldo fuerim loco praeceptoris.

<sup>1086</sup> Allen 2682, 27-35: Ait meos libros Lutetiae publicitus fuisse exustos, ignem subiiciente carnifice. Ait me apud Aldum servi hominis fuisse functum officio, hoc est, lectoris, cum apud Aldum nihil legerem praeter penultimam formam, si quid vellem addere. Aldus legebat post me, idque tantum in meis Adagiis, quae simul et a me scribebantur et ab Aldo excudebantur. Ait vix temperatum a manibus, quod in ea mensa sederem, quum sederem supra Asulanum et Aldum, quumque summo studio hoc egerint ut absolutis Adagiis me menses aliquot remorarentur.

<sup>1087</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 240.

<sup>1088</sup> Davies, *Aldus*, 58.

<sup>1089</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 10.

<sup>1090</sup> In 1527 the Spanish Inquisition, at the instigation of several opponents of Erasmus, called together renowned theologians from across Spain in order to discuss Erasmus’ orthodoxy in 1527. Predictably, high-ranking Spanish churchmen made sure that Erasmus was not condemned. See Lu Ann Homza, ‘Erasmus as Hero, or Heretic? Spanish Humanism and the Valladolid Assembly of 1527’, in *Renaissance Quarterly* 50: 1 (1997): 78-118.

my works as rushed them into print; in fact, frequently I have not kept a manuscript for a single hour, sometimes even handing the sheets to the printer while the ink was still wet upon the page.<sup>1091</sup>

Erasmus admitted on many other occasions that his hasty work had led to sloppiness and mistakes.<sup>1092</sup> He was not the only contemporary editor to experience this problem, and the speed at which many of them worked could not have allowed them enough time for the detailed collation and proofreading that they often claimed to have undertaken. Bussi's complaints about the need to work quickly, for example, are well known, and in his day scholars such as Niccolò Perotti (1429/30-1480) condemned his haste and carelessness as well as that of other early printers.<sup>1093</sup> From his detailed analysis of Aldus' editorial practice and especially from his look at a manuscript fragment of a Greek text that Aldus used as a printer's copy and which Beatus later inherited, Lowry concludes:

We can actually watch the editors run out of material, hastily fill in the gap and shuffle the new piece in somehow with what they already had. When we combine this with what we know of their hurried, uneven emendation and their failure to give clear instructions to the printers, the overall prospect becomes alarming.<sup>1094</sup>

Lowry does find evidence that Aldus and his team sometimes collated manuscripts as they claimed to do, but he also shows that Aldus clearly 'overstated his claims' about his editorial work.<sup>1095</sup> Lowry also disproves the idea that there was any 'unified and coherent method' to 'Aldine editorship'. He describes instead a situation in which the chaotic working conditions, technical challenges and financial pressures facing the Aldine press made it all but impossible for Aldus to undertake editorial work according to the standards outlined in his own

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<sup>1091</sup> Allen 2095, 1-8: Indies, amice lector, magis ac magis probatur mihi consilium Horatianum, admonens ut liber quem cupimus nobis esse superstitem et in omnium versari manibus, nonum prematur in annum. Hac in re fateor non mediocriter peccatum esse, quod omnia fere nostra praecipitavimus verius quam aedidimus, adeo ut frequenter ne in horam quidem presserimus quod erat in manibus, nonnunquam et madidas etiamnum atramento chartas typographis tradentes.

<sup>1092</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 9-15. See many of Erasmus' letters that Vanautgaerden references, especially Allen 269; Allen 919; Allen 1274; Allen 2315.

<sup>1093</sup> See Kenney, *Classical Text*, 14; 12-17. See *Prefazioni*, xxxix-liii. See John Monfasani, 'The First Call for Press Censorship: Niccolo Perotti, Giovanni Andrea Bussi, Antonio Moret, and the Editing of Pliny's *Natural History*', in *Renaissance Quarterly* 41 (1988): 1-31.

<sup>1094</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 238.

<sup>1095</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 247.

forewords, no matter what he wished.<sup>1096</sup> Aldus made some steps towards a more careful re-establishment of ancient texts compared to the first printed editions, where most corrections were done by conjecture,<sup>1097</sup> but conjecture and chaos remained important characteristics of the Aldine ‘editorial method’.<sup>1098</sup> He also admitted to using prior printed editions as base-texts for his own editions, which remained a common practice at the Froben press.<sup>1099</sup> In his 1514 foreword to the Alsatian printer Matthias Schürer’s edition of Pliny’s letters, Beatus advertised this practice, promising that Schürer had followed as closely as possible the prior Aldine edition.<sup>1100</sup>

Suffering from kidney-stones for the first time, Erasmus worked in much less than ideal conditions in order to put together the 1508 *Adages*. It stands to reason that Erasmus brought to Froben’s printing house many years later expectations first developed at Aldus’ press, ‘where he learnt a new way to write, in the middle of the presses’.<sup>1101</sup> According to later evidence, we see similar chaos at the Froben press.<sup>1102</sup> The Dominican Johannes Cuno (1463-1513) worked with Aldus for many years during his long stay at Venice and at Padua from 1500 until 1508.<sup>1103</sup> Cuno knew the working conditions of the Aldine press very

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<sup>1096</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 246-247.

<sup>1097</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 30. See Kenney, *Classical Text*, 47-74.

<sup>1098</sup> Lowry, 225-228; 236-249.

<sup>1099</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 50; 224-225. He used, for example, Bussi’s *editio princeps* as the base-text for his edition of Bessarion’s *In Calumniatorem Platonis*.

<sup>1100</sup> See BWBR 53, 3-6. In the foreword to his famous 1506 edition of Augustine’s *City of God*, Johannes Amerbach claimed to have searched far and wide for manuscripts of Augustine’s works, whereas earlier in the same year he had written his sons in Paris and instructed them to keep their eyes peeled for the latest printed editions at Parisian book-stalls. See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 241. AK 246, 69-74: Sunt etiam adhuc mihi aliqui tractati excudendi, qui sunt sancti Augustini, quos scio quod sunt Parrhisii. Vellem, ut operam daret perquirendo hincinde in liberariis, ubi essent. Magister Johannes [Frobenius] ostendet ei prefatos tractatulos signatos manu mea et initia vel principia illorum. Quos si invenerit, excopieret vel conduceret, qui exscriberet, et eum liberaliter exoluerem. See AK 293, 11-23.

<sup>1101</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 3.

<sup>1102</sup> See Allen 328, 17-35; Allen 2315, 120-135.

<sup>1103</sup> See H. D. Saffrey, ‘Un Humaniste Domnicain, Jean Cuno de Nureberg, Précurseur d’Érasme à Bâle’, in *Bibliothèque d’humanisme et renaissance* 33 (1971): 10-62. See also Davies, *Aldus*, 32.

well,<sup>1104</sup> praised Aldus unreservedly and expressed clearly his great and enduring gratitude towards Aldus and other Venetian scholars such as Marco Musurus and Scipione Forteguerra, both of whom later became Erasmus' friends.<sup>1105</sup> In 1510 Cuno joined in the efforts of the Froben editors who had already been busy at work with the 1516 *Edition* for three years. For him, as for Erasmus, the conditions of the Aldine printing house may have been the best they could imagine given the realities of contemporary printing.<sup>1106</sup> From what we know it is likely that after Erasmus' work for Aldus, 'seven years later at Basel, he found himself in the same conditions' and worked in much the same way.<sup>1107</sup> Inflated claims about editorial rigour,<sup>1108</sup> printing texts 'most accurately' (*accuratissime*)<sup>1109</sup> and collation of most ancient exemplars were par for the course among early modern printers, from Rome's Bussi and Venice's Alessandro Paganino to Aldus, Johannes Amerbach and Froben.<sup>1110</sup> Whatever Aldus and like-minded humanists would have liked to do, theirs was not an ideal world.<sup>1111</sup> Gutenberg himself, after all, was bankrupted when his creditors sued him.<sup>1112</sup>

The Aldine and Froben printing houses had similar operating capacities and conditions, each able to field about four to six presses at any given time and having roughly

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<sup>1104</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 269.

<sup>1105</sup> See BWBR 25 (from Johannes Cuno on 7 March 1512), 45-46.

<sup>1106</sup> Dill I, 143.

<sup>1107</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 363.

<sup>1108</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 217.

<sup>1109</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 29-30.

<sup>1110</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 241. See *Prefazioni*, xl.

<sup>1111</sup> See Aldus' introductory letter to 1495-1496 Theocritus: Si qua tamen leges incastigata magister doctissime, tam hic in quam in caeteris libris, quos ego ad communem studiosorum omnium utilitatem curo imprimendos (nam esse aliqua non eo inficias), non mihi imputes, sed exemplaribus. Non enim recipio me emendaturum libros, nam in quibusdam Oedipo coniectore opus esset, ita enim mutilati quidem sunt et inversi, ut ne ille quidem qui composuit, si revivisceret, emendare posset. [note the parallel to Erasmus' rhetoric for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*]. Sed curaturum summo studio ut vel ipso exemplari imprimantur correctiores. Sic in Apollonio grammatico fecimus, sic in hoc libro, in iis quas addidimus eclogis, rati satius esse aliquid habere quam nihil. Quod incorrectum est, si lateat, raro vel potius nunquam emendatur. Si vero prodit in publicum, erunt multi qui castigent, saltem longa die. Sic in Fabio Quintiliano, sic in C. Plinio nepote, sic in nonnullis aliis factum videmus, qui quotidie emendantur, quotidie pristinae elegantiae et candori proprius accedunt. See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 72-108. Froben had to work with Johann Amerbach's old business partner, Wolfgang Lachner. For more information on him and on his work with Froben, see *Contemporaries* 2, 279-280.

<sup>1112</sup> Grendler, *Aldus Manutius*, 10.

the same numbers of workers.<sup>1113</sup> In these two presses Erasmus came to know, to take part in and to develop a new kind of relationship between printer and scholar, which Grendler calls the ‘alliance between scholar and printer’ that has not entirely disappeared even today.<sup>1114</sup> Lowry remarks that ‘until the age of Aldus, there is little sign of anything more than a business relationship between printers and scholars’.<sup>1115</sup> We see something different, however, at the Aldus’ press, where Aldus enjoyed great status in the Republic of Letters and noted scholars such as Poliziano and Pietro Bembo worked with him as colleagues.<sup>1116</sup> When Aldus began printing he was already a formidable Classical and Christian scholar in his own right, and by the time Erasmus first wrote to him in 1507 Aldus was famous as the foremost Western printer of texts in the Greek language, embodied in the 1497 edition of Aristotle’s works.<sup>1117</sup> For this reason Erasmus wrote to him in 1507 with deference that we never see in his letters to other printers. Unlike Aldus, however, Erasmus’ printers in Northern Europe were men of limited education. Vanautgaerden shows that Froben and Erasmus’ other major printer, Thierry Martens at Louvain, did not actually write the introductory letters attributed to them.<sup>1118</sup> Froben was probably incapable of even reading the Latin letters bearing his name, which Erasmus suggested when he wrote to him a letter with a terse introduction in the simplest Latin: ‘Read this letter with Beatus or with someone who knows Latin.’<sup>1119</sup> Erasmus’ composition of letters for his printer Froben is in marked contrast to his relationship with Aldus, who tactfully brushed off Erasmus’ offer to write the foreword to the 1507 edition of Euripides and instead wrote his own. Nonetheless, that Erasmus wrote many letters

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<sup>1113</sup> See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 95, Crousaz, *Pouvoir*, 62-63. Crousaz cites Allen 594, 17-19; Allen 1910, 8-9; Allen 2046, 511; Allen 2062, 26.

<sup>1114</sup> Grendler, *Aldus Manutius*, 24.

<sup>1115</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 28-29. See also pages 12-13.

<sup>1116</sup> For discussion of the contemporary ‘republic of letters’ and its Venetian base see Vittore Branca in *Storia di Venezia* 4, 750-752.

<sup>1117</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 48-71. Carlo Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio: umanista e editore* (Milano: Il polifilo, 1995), 21; 37-76. Grendler, *Aldus Manutius*, 13. Davies, *Aldus*, 20. Renaudet, *Érasme et l’Italie*, 83.

<sup>1118</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 3; 94; 255-262.

<sup>1119</sup> Allen 885, 1: Lege hand epistolam cum Beato aut aliquo qui sciat Latinum. For more treatment of Froben’s Latin letters see Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 325-361, especially pages 326-327.

in Froben's stead does show his commitment to the ideal of an humanist printer which he first saw embodied in Aldus.<sup>1120</sup>

Erasmus' ideal humanist printer was a *Christian* humanist. Aldus shared Erasmus' enthusiasm for both Classical and Christian Antiquity, something that we see in the first Greek texts that he printed, which included the Psalms and the *Office of the Virgin*.<sup>1121</sup> In addition to his numerous editions of Latin and Greek Classical authors,<sup>1122</sup> Aldus published an edition of Jerome's Latin translations of Origen's *Homilies*. In one of this edition's introductory letters Aldus praised 'the great doctor of the Holy Church Jerome', 'famous in the whole world for his doctrine, his learning and his wisdom'.<sup>1123</sup> Moreover, he proclaimed it providential that Jerome be chosen to translate the works of Origen, the 'steel-man' (*Adamantius*) of Biblical scholarship.<sup>1124</sup> That Aldus and his colleagues knew Jerome's works is also clear in the foreword to his 1501-1502 edition of Apollonius,<sup>1125</sup> and in other Aldine editions we find many citations of Jerome.<sup>1126</sup> Aldus published an important edition of early Christian poets in 1502, among the first of his editions, if not the first, to bear his famous anchor and dolphin device.<sup>1127</sup> His 1504 in-quarto edition of Gregory Nazianzenus' poems including the Greek text and a facing Latin translation, which Erasmus brought with him on

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<sup>1120</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 319-329.

<sup>1121</sup> Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio*, 107. For details about this edition see *In Aedibus Aldi*, 35-36.

<sup>1122</sup> See, for instance, Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 158.

<sup>1123</sup> Foreword to 1503 Origen (Aldine 106 at the Marciana): Illud praecipue caventes, ne alieno opertus nomine, interpreti nostro, et sacrasanctae ecclesiae doctore egregio Hieronymo, quasi inscitiae cuiusdam nequum infligeret. Cuius sane doctrina, studium, eruditio, sapientia toto iam orbe celebris, vel praeconio nostro, vel testimonio non eget. Quippe qui miro eloquentiae suae fluvio (ut alia nunc fileam) ipsum hunc etiam: quem habemus prae manibus, sic illustravit autorem, ut nobis quoque in illud magni Alexandri, quod ad Achillis tumulum ille veniens dixit, haud immerito prorumpere fas sit.

<sup>1124</sup> *Preface to Books of the Pentateuch* in 1503 Origen: Felicem te Adamantem, qui tali frueris et interprete simul, et praecone meritum...Et quod perinde fortasse iucundum, atque mirum sit: quod videlicet Adamantius noster, sicuti non dissimilis erga se affectus, ita quoque unius successores nominis amicos fortitus sit. Divus quippe Hieronymus interpres, Hieronymus alter, qui et ipse (si tamen homini, ante tempus, de homine sententiam proferre licet) non immerito Divus, dedit exemplar.

<sup>1125</sup> Orlandi, *Aldo Manuzio editore* 1, 41-48.

<sup>1126</sup> See Orlandi, *Aldo Manuzio editore* 1, 94-97.

<sup>1127</sup> See *In Aedibus Aldi*, 3; 15-17.



his journey to Italy, was ground-breaking.<sup>1128</sup> Aldus' abiding interest in Patristic and in more recent religious texts, such as the letters of Catherine of Siena that he published in 1500 and in which he included an impressive foreword in the vernacular, is unmistakable.<sup>1129</sup> His commitment to Christian humanism was, at any event, clear enough to Erasmus, who in his first letter to the scholar and printer made known his surprise that Aldus had not yet undertaken to print the New Testament.<sup>1130</sup> In his famous adage, *Festina lente* ('Make haste slowly'), Erasmus stated that Aldus had projects to print many important Hebrew and Aramaic works in addition to his widely popular Latin and Greek editions.<sup>1131</sup> Aldus had expressed this hope in the notice to readers before his short 'Introduction to the Hebrew Language' that he included at the end of his Latin grammar and Lascaris' Greek grammar, both of which he printed in 1501:

Since I believe that the Hebrew language is necessary for the knowledge of Sacred Scripture, I am now putting out the Hebrew alphabet, the combinations of its letters and a few other things with which you might begin to learn to read Hebrew. If these efforts prove useful, next I hope to print, God willing, a full Hebrew grammar, a dictionary and sacred books. Farewell.<sup>1132</sup>

In 1501, Aldus had in fact printed several pages of the book of Genesis with Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts in three columns, some of which he sent to the German humanist Conrad

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<sup>1128</sup> Margolin, 'Fêtes vénitiennes', 24.

<sup>1129</sup> Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio*, 107. Piero Scapecchi, *Aldo Manuzio: I suoi libri, i suoi amici tra XV e XVI secolo* (Firenze: Octavo, Franco Contini editore, 1994), 3.

<sup>1130</sup> Allen 207, 16-19: Demiror quid obstiterit, quo minus Novum Testamentum iampridem evulgaris, opus (in me fallit coniectura) etiam vulgo placiturum maxime nostro, id est, Theologorum ordini.

<sup>1131</sup> ASD II-3, 16-17, 249-254: Quod si pulcherrimis planeque regiis Aldi nostri votis deus aliquis bonis literis amicus aspiraverit et *si quem numina laeva sinant*, intra paucos annos illud futurum polliceor studiosis, ut quicquid est bonorum autorum in quatuor linguis: Latina, Graecae, Hebraica, Chaldaica, tum autem in omni genere disciplinarum, id unius huius operae et plenum habeant et emendatum, nullamque iam literariae suppellectilis partem quisquam desideret. For more on this adage see Vanautgaerden, 139-146. For the English translation see CWE 33, 3-17.

<sup>1132</sup> See Anna Campos, 'La grammatica ebraica di Aldo Manuzio', in *Aldo Manuzio e l'ambiente veneziano*, 103-106. On page 104 we find Aldus' notice: Aldus studiosis. Quoniam Hebraicam linguam necessariam esse existimamus ad sacrae scripturae cognitionem, nunc Alphabetum, et literarum combinationes, et alia quaedam damus, quo legere hebraice discatis. Deinceps institutiones Grammaticas, dictionarium et sacros libros, si haec placuisse cognovero, Deo volente, dabimus. Valet.

Celtis as a kind of preview.<sup>1133</sup> ‘I have not yet printed the Old and New Testaments in Greek, Latin and Hebrew,’ he wrote to Celtis, ‘but I shall do’.<sup>1134</sup> Aldus was not able to make good on his enduring wish to publish this Bible and other Hebrew works, but two Venetian patricians of a later generation, Marco Giustinian and Alvise Bragadin, later took the lead in printing Hebrew texts at Venice.<sup>1135</sup> As for the Greek text, one of Aldus’ collaborators for the 1509 Aldine Plutarch edition on which Erasmus also worked, the Cretan scholar Demetrios Doucas (1482-1527), later took charge of preparing the Greek text for the *Polyglot Bible* project at the University of Alcalá.<sup>1136</sup> In his letters and forewords, Aldus tried to uphold and to further ‘human and Christian wisdom, profoundly conscious of the limits of the sciences on their own and of the need to crown the Graeco-Latin tradition with the Evangelical teaching’.<sup>1137</sup> His Christian humanism found an especially warm welcome in contemporary Venice, many of whose scholars and politicians were also convinced and engaged Christians.<sup>1138</sup>

In 1505 Erasmus translated Lucian’s *Dialogues* with Thomas More’s help, but his stay in Venice was one of his first long-standing engagements to work in a community of scholars and his first chance to edit Greek texts with the help of many expert Greek scholars, some of them native Greek speakers.<sup>1139</sup> It was also a chance for Erasmus to make important and lasting contacts in the contemporary republic of letters. Thanks to the scholarly community that passed through and gathered at Aldus’ printing house, and on which Aldus

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<sup>1133</sup> See *Aldo Manuzio tipografo 1494-1515*, eds. Luciana Bigliazzi, Angelia Dillo Bussi, Giancarlo Savino, Piero Scapecchi (Firenze: Franco Cantini Editore, 1994), 92.

<sup>1134</sup> Aldus’ letter from 7 July 1501, cited in Castellani, *La Stampa in Venezia*, 46. Aldus wrote: *Vetus et novum Testamentum graece, latine et hebraice nondum impressi, sed parturio.*

<sup>1135</sup> See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 84.

<sup>1136</sup> See Dazzi, *Aldo Manuzio*, 31; *La stampa greca*, 33.

<sup>1137</sup> *Storia di Venezia* 4, 752.

<sup>1138</sup> *Storia di Venezia* 4, 726.

<sup>1139</sup> Robin Sowerby, ‘Humanitas Renata’, in *Renaissance? Perceptions of Continuity and Discontinuity in Europe*, 67-80. See also Marcon and Zorzi, *Aldo Manuzio e l’ambiente veneziano*, 29.

depended for his editions,<sup>1140</sup> Erasmus made friends with noteworthy scholars such as Marco Musuro and John Lascaris, the latter of whom was a friend of Lorenzo il Magnifico and Ambassador for King Louis XII of France.<sup>1141</sup> In *Festina lente*, Erasmus named some of the friends that he made while working for Aldus, including Poliziano's student Giovanni Battista Egnazio and Giovanni de' Medici's teacher, Urbano Valeriani.<sup>1142</sup> Lowry has shown that although it is unlikely that any 'Aldine academy' ever took shape, Aldus' press became 'a natural rallying-point' for local as well as for foreign humanists passing through or dwelling in the city, such as Reuchlin, Cuno, Celtis and William Linacre.<sup>1143</sup> Carlo Dionisotti refutes the idea that Erasmus made great progress in the study of Greek while in Italy,<sup>1144</sup> but many of the men associated with the Aldine press were outstanding Greek scholars and it is unlikely that Erasmus passed over the chance to learn as much as possible from them. During his months of feverish work on the 1508 *Adages*, Erasmus admitted without reservation his reliance on the Greek-speaking scholars associated with Aldus' press for information and for counsel:<sup>1145</sup>

Just consider what advantages I should have lost, had not scholars supplied me with texts in manuscript (*libros manu descriptos*). Among them were Plato's works in Greek, Plutarch's *Lives* and also his *Moralia* which began to be printed when my work was nearly finished, the *Doctors at Dinner* of Athenaeus, Aphthonius, Hermogenes with notes, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* with the scholia of Gregory of Nazianzus, the whole of Aristides with *scholia*, brief commentaries on Hesiod and Theocritus, Eustathius on the whole of Homer, Pausanias, Pindar with accurate commentary, a collection of proverbs under Plutarch's name and another ascribed to Apostolius to which I was given access by Girolamo Aleandro. There were other small things too whose names escape me or are not worth recording. Not one of these had yet been printed.<sup>1146</sup>

<sup>1140</sup> See *Scribes and Scholars*, 154-158.

<sup>1141</sup> See Kenney, *Classical Text*, 52. Tatham, 'Erasmus in Italy', 642-662; 658. See De Nolhac, *Érasme en Italie*, 46-50.

<sup>1142</sup> See *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 32, 88-92. *La stampa greca a Venezia nei secoli XV e XVI*, 7-8.

<sup>1143</sup> For the most complete list of scholars associated with the Aldine press, see Castellani, *La stampa in Venezia*, 52-54. See also Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 195-207.

<sup>1144</sup> Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio*, volume 1, 67-76.

<sup>1145</sup> Nolhac, *Érasme et l'Italie*, 51-52.

<sup>1146</sup> ASD II-3, 22, 395-405: Hic mihi cogita, quanta pars utilitatis abfutura fuerit, nisi docti libros manu descriptos suppeditassent. In his erant opera Platonis Graeca, Plutarchi Vitae, eiusdem Moralia, quae sub finem operis mei coepta sunt excudi, Athenaei Dipnosophistae, Aphthonius, Hermogenes cum commentariis, Aristotelis Rhetorica cum scholiis Gregorii Nazianzeni, Aristides totus cum scholiis, commentarioli in Hesiodum ac Theocritum, Eustathius in totum Homerum, Pausanias, Pindarus cum accuratis commentariis, proverbiorum

In addition to such help, scholars at the Aldine press, such as Musuro and Egnazio, were or had been in touch with some of contemporary Venetian and Florentine humanism's foremost names. At Torresani's house Erasmus shared a room with Girolamo Aleandro, a promising young scholar with excellent Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and befriended Scipione Forteguerri, another young scholar accomplished in Greek.<sup>1147</sup> Erasmus also got to know Venetian humanists such as Paolo Canal, Giovanni Cotta and Ambrogio Leoni.<sup>1148</sup> These acquaintances had knowledge of and opened doors to an even broader network of friends and colleagues.<sup>1149</sup> Lowry believes that 'most of Aldus' editions were probably the work of a team rather than a single scholar, the sum-total of many men's' opinions rather than one man's observations'.<sup>1150</sup> Although Erasmus' work for the 1508 *Adages* was more intense and committed than that of other contributors, he gladly accepted help from other scholars and correctors:

For I am not afraid to speak from my own experience. When I, a Dutchman, was in Italy, preparing to publish my book of *Adages*, all the learned men there had offered me unsought authors not yet published in print who they thought might be of use to me and Aldus had nothing in his treasure-house that he did not share with me. Johannes Lascaris did the same, so did Battista Egnazio, Marco Musuro, Frate Urbano. I felt the benefit of kindness from some people I knew neither by sight nor name. I was bringing nothing to Venice with me except the confused and unsorted materials for a book that was to be, and that material was confined to published authors. With the greatest temerity on my part, we both set to work together, I to write and Aldus to print. The whole business was finished inside nine months more or less, and all the time I was coping with an attack of the stone, a trouble in which as yet I had no experience.<sup>1151</sup>

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collectio titulo Plutarchi, rursus alia titulo Apostolii, cuius libri nobis copiam fecit Hieronymus Aleander. Erant et alia minuta, quae vel non succurrunt, vel non attinet referre.

<sup>1147</sup> For more on Aleander see Ingram Bywater, 'The Erasmian Pronunciation of Greek and its Precursors' [public lecture at Exeter College, Oxford, 20 May 1907] (London: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1908), 10-13. Dazzi, *Aldo Manuzio*, 33; 117.

<sup>1148</sup> See Allen 1347, 239-257; Dionisotti, *Aldo*, 22; 67-76.

<sup>1149</sup> Piero Scapecchi, 'Tra il Giglio e l'Ancora', in *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance Culture*, 26-27.

<sup>1150</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 247.

<sup>1151</sup> ASD II-3, 22, 384-395: Nec enim vereor praedicare, quod sum expertus. Cum apud Italos aederem proverbiorum opus homo Batavus, quotquot illic aderant eruditi, ultro suppeditabant autores nondum per typographuos evulgatos, quos mihi suspicabantur usui futuros. Aldus nihil habebat in thesauro suo, quod non communicaret, idem fecit Ioannes Lascaris, Baptista Egnatius, Marcus Musurus, frater Urbanus. Quorundam officium sensi, quos nec de facie, nec de nomine noveram. Venetiam nihil mecum apportabam praeter confusam et indigestam operis futuri materiam, idque ex evulgatis duntaxat autoribus. Magna mea temeritate simul utrique sumus aggressi: ego scribere, Aldus excudere. Summa negotii intra menses plus minus novem confecta est, et interim mihi cum calculo malo nondum noto res erat.

In order to produce the 1516 *Edition*, a team of noteworthy scholars worked on this project since 1507. Likewise, to produce the 1508 edition of Erasmus' *Adages* was only possible through collective work that Erasmus unmistakably acknowledged and appreciated.

Erasmus' ten months in Venice are often seen in the unflattering light of his 1531 colloquy *Opulentia Sordida* (*Sordid Wealth*), published more than twenty years after his departure from the lagoons in late 1508.<sup>1152</sup> It was unlike Erasmus to write something so tactless about Torresani and Aldus, who both generously welcomed him.<sup>1153</sup> *Opulentia Sordida*'s mockery of living conditions at the Torresani household must be seen in part, however, as a polemical answer to Scaliger's biting *Oratio pro Cicerone*. Erasmus mistakenly believed the *Oratio* to be the work of Girolamo Aleandro, who had become a high-ranking Vatican functionary since the two scholars' time spent together at Aldus' press.<sup>1154</sup> It clearly outraged him and spurred him to write several heated letters in response. Erasmus may have had some disappointments with his time at Venice and his scattered, negative comments about his experiences in Italy in later years likely contain some truth. His letters from later years, however, also testify abundantly to the debt he felt towards his Venetian hosts and colleagues, with many of whom he remained in correspondence until his death.<sup>1155</sup> He learnt an enormous amount while in Italy and came away from the *Bel Paese* with a doctorate in theology, important and lasting contacts at the Papal Court and international fame as a scholar.<sup>1156</sup> Erasmus' acquaintance Paulo Cortese, a Papal secretary

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<sup>1152</sup> For information about Erasmus' whereabouts in 1508-1509, see Allen's introductions in Allen 211; 212; 216.

<sup>1153</sup> For an explanation of how this colloquy could have been making reference to Aldus' subordinate position within a larger business venture, see Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 86.

<sup>1154</sup> See Anthony Grafton's treatment of this literary feud in *Contemporaries* 3, 212-214.

<sup>1155</sup> See Allen 574; 588; 868; 1623; 1707; 2105; 2249; 2302; 2448; 2871; 2964.

<sup>1156</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Erasmus from an Italian Perspective', 1.

and Pomponio Leto's student,<sup>1157</sup> praised Erasmus for his Greek eloquence and called Erasmus and Aldus two of the greatest contemporary contributors to Christendom in his *De cardinalatu* (*On the Cardinalate*), published in 1510 after his death.<sup>1158</sup> This comparison would have been unthinkable before Erasmus' arrival at Venice.

Through Aldus, Erasmus was also exposed to the most advanced textual, Biblical and Patristic scholarship that contemporary Venice's scholars and learned circles had to offer.<sup>1159</sup> In addition to Classical texts that were widely and always in demand, such as Cicero's works, at this time Venetian printers and editors were also putting out an impressive range of new editions of the Church Fathers.<sup>1160</sup> The catalogues of Venetian libraries show a wealth of printed Patristic texts which Erasmus could easily have found in contemporary Venice had he frequented its many bookshops, presses and libraries.<sup>1161</sup> To look only at editions of Jerome's works, at least six Latin editions of Jerome's letters had been printed at Venice before Erasmus' arrival: Antonio Bartolomeo's 1470 edition, Antonio Miscomini's 1476 Venetian edition, Andrea Torresani's (later Aldus' father-in-law) 1488 edition, Bernardino Benalius' 1490 edition, Jean Rubeus' 1496 edition and Filippo Pinzi's 1496 edition. These editions all included Theodore Lelli's commentaries on Jerome's letters that, as we shall see below, Erasmus used either directly or indirectly in order to make his own commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*.<sup>1162</sup> Also available at this time was the Gregorii brothers' 1497-1498 edition of

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<sup>1157</sup> He could have also been an acquaintance of Bussi. See *Prefazioni*, xxi.

<sup>1158</sup> See Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio* editor, volume 1, 22. He cites two passages from Cortese's *De cardinalatu*. The second reads: 'quid ex his qui mihi sunt scriptis tantum aut nominis celebritate noti, vel Erasmo Batavo vel Aldo Romano tribuendum esse non censeam? Cum alter tantum excellat doctrina rerum, alterum tam fuerit necessarium quam imprimendi technam in Re Publica Christiana nasci.'

<sup>1159</sup> Such learned circles had names such as 'the United', 'the Seraphic', 'the Uranians' and 'the Pilgrims'. See Jean Alazard, *Le Venise de la Renaissance* (Paris: Hachette, 1956), 95. See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 189-190. Tatham, 'Erasmus in Italy', 652. Among others, Erasmus would meet Bernardo Rucellai, and he was invited to a dinner with the General D'Alviano.

<sup>1160</sup> Grendler, *Aldus Manutius*, 13; 21-22. Renaudet, *Érasme et l'Italie*, 81-83.

<sup>1161</sup> See Kristeller, 'Erasmus from an Italian Perspective', 8-14.

<sup>1162</sup> For a list of these editions see Dill I, 48-49. See *Contra Rufinum*, Pierre Lardet, ed. and tr., *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CCSL) 79 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), 199-219.

Jerome's commentaries on the Bible edited by the Camaldolese monk Bernardino Gadolo.<sup>1163</sup> Reuchlin's copy of this edition, the ink-smudged *Druckvorlage* of volumes five through nine of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, survives today at Basel University's library. Dill thinks it almost certain that on his voyage from Cambridge to Basel in 1514, Erasmus took with him both the 1508 Saccon edition of Jerome's letters and this 1497-1498 Venetian edition of Jerome's commentaries.<sup>1164</sup> At the very latest Erasmus got to know this Venetian edition whilst at Basel from 1514 until 1516. It seems most likely to me, however, that Erasmus had already begun working with this edition during his ten months at Venice, if not beforehand, since his use and citation of Jerome and of other Church Fathers in the *Adages* had greatly increased since 1500.<sup>1165</sup> It is hard to imagine that he pulled so many quotes from memory, and his sources for Jerome's writings likely comprised some of the above Venetian editions.<sup>1166</sup> Whenever Erasmus began to use the 1497-1498 Venetian edition of Jerome's commentaries, he did eventually use it and expressed respect for its editor. In his response to Edward Lee's writings against his *Annotationes*, when defending his analysis of a questionable passage in Matthew 21, Erasmus answered charges that he had impudently changed or 'falsified' Scripture:

Although the Greek codexes agree among themselves and the old [Latin] codexes agree with the Greek, although Jerome reads and interprets thus and Origen reads and interprets thus, Lee demands that on his authority we erase what is in the Greek and Latin codexes. For the Aldine edition too agrees with the exemplars that I was able to see. And who was that forger who was able to corrupt all these texts at the same time? Manuscripts Greek and Latin (*codices manuscriptos*), the printer's copy (*exemplar*) Bade followed in his edition of Origen, the copy the Venetian printer followed the works of Jerome (and they were corrected by a monk [this is Gadolo] who was neither ignorant nor careless), and the very old copies (*exemplaria pervetusta*) followed by the Amerbach brothers, young men of proven integrity and anything but forgers!<sup>1167</sup>

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<sup>1163</sup> Dill I, 56-57.

<sup>1164</sup> Dill I, 173.

<sup>1165</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 21.

<sup>1166</sup> Dill I, 82.

<sup>1167</sup> ASD IX-4, 103-104, 841-851: Quid hoc homine confidentius? Cum Graecorum codices consentiant, cum vetusti codices consentiant cum Graecis, cum sic legat Hieronymus et interpretetur, cum sic legat Origenes et interpretetur, postulat Leus, ut ipsius auctoritatem secuti radamus et Graecos et Latinos codices. Nam Aldina quoque aeditio consentit cum exemplaribus, quae videre contigit. Et quis tandem fuit ille falsarius, qui simul haec omnia potuerit corrumpere: codices manuscriptos, Graecos pariter et Latinos, exemplar quod secutus est Badius in Origene, exemplar quod secutus in operibus Hieronymi typographus Venetus castigatore monacho

In this example Erasmus unmistakably compared Gadolo to scholars that he respected and with whom he worked, such as Aldus and the Amerbach brothers. In order to conclude this treatment of the Venetian contributions to Erasmus' scholarship, we shall briefly look at Gadolo's life and work, including his efforts to edit the first and only printed edition of Jerome's commentaries that appeared before the 1516 *Edition*. In doing so we shall see that ideas of textual criticism which Erasmus and other Froben editors espoused and promoted in the 1516 Froben *New Testament*, the 1516 Jerome *Edition* and other contemporary works would not have been out of place in 1490s or 1500s Venice or at Gadolo's monastery.

According to Cécile Caby, Venetian religious communities in the late fifteenth century made for a 'dynamic centre of historical writing' where readers demanded 'more authentic lives' of the saints.<sup>1168</sup> The monks of Holy Cross on Giudecca, for example, asked the bishop of Verona, Ermolao Barbaro the Elder (1410-1471), to write a new life of Saint Athanasius. These monks believed that the version currently in use was 'not at all faithful', filled with many apocryphal stories and 'did not everywhere contain the truth'.<sup>1169</sup> In addition to their concern for more accurate history and texts of the Classics, the Church Fathers and the Bible, members of religious orders played an important role in promoting the new art of printing in the Veneto.<sup>1170</sup> This might be expected, for many of the greatest proponents of early printing in Italy, including the bishops Lelli and Bussi and the printers Sweynheim and

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quodam nec indocto nec indiligenti, exemplaria pervetusta, quae secuti sunt fratres Amerbachii, spectatissimae fidei iuvenes neque quicquam minus quam falsarii? Rummel guesses that the *typographus Venetus* here was 'perhaps the editor or Origen's Homilies by Lazarus de Soardis, Venice, 1513'. See footnote 848-849. In this case, however, Erasmus is clearly speaking of Gadolo and the 1497-1498 Venetian edition. For the English translation see CWE 72, 107.

<sup>1168</sup> Cécile Caby, 'Bernardino Gadolo ou les débuts de l'historiographie camaldule', in *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome*, 109: 1 (Rome: *École française de Rome*, 1997), 234-235.

<sup>1169</sup> Cécile Caby, 'L'humanisme au service de l'observance', 124: [the monks wrote] *cum existimetis veterem illam de eo viro pervulgatam historiam...haudquaquam fidelem esse...iudicetisque illam multis in rebus apocriphan esse nec ubique veritatem continere*.

<sup>1170</sup> See Aldo Manuzio *e l'ambiente*, 15. See *Storia di Venezia* 4, 817-909.



Pannartz, were in religious orders of some kind. Throughout its first decades the Venetian printing industry was especially indebted to the Camaldolese monks at San Michele's near the island of Murano.<sup>1171</sup> Gadolo was a monk at this monastery until his transfer in 1498 to Florence's Saint Mary of the Angels, where he served as prior until his death at the age of thirty-six on 22 April 1499. Born a few years before Erasmus in 1463 at Pontevico, a town in between Cremona and Brescia, Gadolo finished his studies in canon law at the University of Padua before entering San Michele's in 1479 at the age of eighteen, the same age when Erasmus entered Steyn Abbey. Three years later he took his solemn vows in the presence of San Michele's humanist abbot, Pietro Dolfin.<sup>1172</sup> At his new home Gadolo found a community influenced by Traversari's reforms earlier in the fifteenth century and marked humanist learning, in which austere monastic practice was combined with an interest in the Classics, in good Latin style and in the Church Fathers, especially Jerome.<sup>1173</sup> The island-community of San Michele's also had an impressive library filled with texts from pagan and Christian Antiquity.<sup>1174</sup> In his short life as a monk, scholar, editor and curator of this library, Gadolo often found himself working and corresponding with contemporary Italian letters' superstars, including Poliziano, Pico, Francis Piccolomini, Bernardo Bembo, Pietro Dolfin, Paolo Orlandini, Pietro Candido Decembrio and Pietro Crinito.<sup>1175</sup> Later members of this community included Vincenzo Querini and Tommaso Giustiniani, who enthusiastically championed reform of the Church from the top down in their joint 1513 *Libellus ad Leonem X*

<sup>1171</sup> For more on Dolfin see Vittorino Meneghin, *San Michele in Isola di Venezia*, volume 1 (Venezia: Stamperia di Venezia, 1962), 146-168. Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 36. See Edoardo Barbieri, *Il Libro nella storia* (Milano: Edizioni C.U.S.L., 2000), 144.

<sup>1172</sup> For a good biography see Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 168-178. See Caby, 'Bernardino Gadolo ou les débuts de l'historiographie camaldule', 241. See *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 51, 182-184.

<sup>1173</sup> Caby, 'I Padri nell'osservanza Camaldolese', 181. See Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 156-158.

<sup>1174</sup> See list of some surviving copies of this library, now at the Rilliana library near Poppi in Tuscany, in *Gli incunaboli della biblioteca comunale Rilliana di Poppi e del monastero di Camaldoli*, ed. Piero Scapecchi (Firenze: Pagnini e Martinelli, 2004). See the newest treatment of the library at Saint Michele's in Lucia Merolla, *La biblioteca di San Michele di Murano all'epoca dell'abate Giovanni Benedetto Mittarelli* (Roma: Vecchiarelli Editore, 2010). See pages 22-23 for a short treatment of Gadolo's management of the library.

<sup>1175</sup> Scapecchi, 'Tra il Giglio e l'Ancora', 17-30; Scapecchi, *Aldo Manuzio: I suoi libri*, 26-27. See also *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 51, 182-184. Bembo was Aldus' friend and also a friend of Lorenzo il Magnifico. See *Storia di Venezia* 4, 894-895.

(*Book to Leo X*) which called for, among other things, translation of the Bible into the vernacular and careful education of priests in the Classics and the Church Fathers.<sup>1176</sup> As far back as the 1470s it was the Camaldolese monks of San Michele's who undertook to print the first Italian-language Bible, and it is perhaps at this monastery more than at any other that Traversari's reforms had been most fully implemented, and his ideal of the humanist-monk most unreservedly encouraged.<sup>1177</sup>

Gadolo was involved in the works of some of Venice's important contemporary printers, including Paganino de' Paganini, with whom he printed an enormous and very successful 1495 edition of the *Vulgate* including Nicholas of Lyra's commentaries.<sup>1178</sup> Given that a sizeable part of the contemporary Venetian printing community worked in some way on this edition, it is quite probable that many of Aldus' future collaborators and workers had taken part in the creation of the 1495 Bible and had worked with Gadolo and his own editorial team.<sup>1179</sup> Gadolo was clearly in contact with many of Aldus' scholarly friends and colleagues, and for his part Aldus had contacts with members of Saint Michele's community, including with Gadolo's superior Pietro Dolfino, to whom he dedicated part of his popular 1502 edition of the ancient Christian poets. Aldus also wrote the epitaph for the tomb of the Camaldolese monk Eusebio Orsono, once Gadolo's student and later part of Aldus' scholarly circle.<sup>1180</sup> On a discrete funerary monument above confessionals on the left side of the nave of the church on San Michele's that once belonged to the Camaldolese monks, today we can

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<sup>1176</sup> For the most detailed treatment of the *Libellus ad Leonem X*, which has not been printed in a critical edition, see Benoît Schmitz, 'Un office spirituel. Le pape et les devoirs de sa charge dans les projets de réforme autour du concile de Latran V', in *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, Italie et Méditerranée* 121:1 (2009): 219-259. Barbieri, *Libro nella storia*, 30-31.

<sup>1177</sup> See Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 74-77; 139-146. See *Storia di Venezia* 4, 844-846.

<sup>1178</sup> Barbieri, *Libro nella storia*, 30-31. *Storia di Venezia* 4, 888.

<sup>1179</sup> *Aldo manuzio e l'ambiente*, 18-19.

<sup>1180</sup> See Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 177. See *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, eds. Michael J. B. Allen, Valery Rees, Martin Davies (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 43. See Scapecchi, 'Tra il Giglio e l'Ancora', 27-28. Scapecchi, *Aldo Manuzio: I suoi libri*, 25-26. For more on Orsono's contacts with Aldus see Meneghin, *San Michele* volume 1, 178-183.

still read Aldus' praise of Orsono as 'a man most learned (*doctissimus*) in every way and an admirable exemplar of how to live'.<sup>1181</sup> Although I cannot yet prove direct contact between Aldus and Gadolo, in the closely connected world of contemporary Venetian printing and editing it is possible that they met and knew each other and all but impossible that they had not heard of each other.<sup>1182</sup> In any event, when Aldus was only one of many foreign printers newly installed in the city, Gadolo was already Pietro Dolfín's right-hand-man,<sup>1183</sup> well-connected in Venetian scholarly circles and widely respected as the editor-in-chief of Paganino's highly successful 1495 Bible with Nicholas of Lyra's commentaries (*Postilla*), published in four massive volumes.<sup>1184</sup> Despite Gadolo's untimely death, Erasmus too came to know many of Gadolo's former colleagues, including Venetian Paolo Canal.<sup>1185</sup> Erasmus and Canal first met through Aldus in 1508, and when Canal died later that year Erasmus lamented the untimely death of this young man who to his mind had been born for the 'greatest things' (*summīs rebus natus*).<sup>1186</sup> Canal chose San Michele's for his Holy Week celebrations in 1508 and for his deathbed when he fell sick soon afterwards. Before dying, he professed religious vows as a Camaldolese monk.<sup>1187</sup>

Caby claims that Gadolo's letter of introduction to the 1495 Bible was worthy of the 'best principles of textual criticism'.<sup>1188</sup> I have not closely examined Gadolo's editorial work

<sup>1181</sup> See Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 182: Lector, parumper siste, rem miram leges/Hic Eusebii Hispani monachi corpus situm est/Vir undecunque qui fuit doctissimus/Nostraeque vitae exemplar admirabile/Morbo laborans sexdecim totos dies/Edens, bibens nil prorsus, et usque suos monens/Deum adiit. Hoc scire volebam. Abi et vale. Ann. D. MDI. X. Feb. aetatis suae LI sacrae militiae XVII.

<sup>1182</sup> For example, Francesco Griffo, now known for having cut Aldus' famous italics, also designed founts for Gregorio di Gregori. See Angelo Colla, 'Tipografi, editori e libri a Padova, Treviso, Vicenza, Verona, Trento' in *La Stampa degli incubaboli nel Veneto* (Verona: Tipografia Editoriale 'Aldo Manuzio', 1983), 40.

<sup>1183</sup> Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 168-169. Meneghin cites a letter in which Dolfín wrote: Bernardinus Brixienis...optimae spes nos fecit eo quod et doctus esset et prae se ferret optimam indolem.

<sup>1184</sup> See *Aldo Manuzio e l'ambiente*, 18-19. See Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 155-156; 172-173.

<sup>1185</sup> *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 17, 668-673.

<sup>1186</sup> Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 184. Meneghin quotes Erasmus: Venetiae vidi Paulum Canalem patritium iuvenem summīs rebus natus, nisi mors illud ingenium terris invidisset...phtisi periit, me illic agente.

<sup>1187</sup> Meneghin, *San Michele*, volume 1, 185-187.

<sup>1188</sup> Cécile Caby, 'I Padri nell'osservanza Camaldolese', 187.

for this thesis, but it seems that for this edition he followed standard practice at the time by mostly adopting the commonplace Latin text widely available in print in the 1490s.<sup>1189</sup> In his introductory letter to the 1495 Bible, however, Gadolo did put forward editorial principles typical of humanist editors and which Aldus and Erasmus later repeated and defended. In this letter addressed to the humanist Cardinal-protector of the Camaldolese order and Archbishop of Siena, Francis Piccolomini, Gadolo claimed that the ‘restoration’ of the true Biblical text was at least in part possible though careful consultation of ancient Biblical manuscripts and codexes. His language about his editorial principles in this letter was more precise than what we find in Erasmus’ forewords to the 1516 Froben *New Testament*, since he clearly distinguished between manuscripts (*codices manu scriptores*) and printed editions (*impressos*) that he consulted in order to emend the base-text (*archetypo*):

Therefore I sought out, going to no small trouble, all prior printed books of Sacred Scripture (*omnes iam antea impressos sacrae scripturae libros*) as well as five manuscripts (*manu scriptos ad quinque numero*). While looking at the codex that they were using as a base-text (*archetypo*), whenever something appeared to be either corrupted or dubious, I most diligently inspected all the codices. When from my examination of these I found errors in the base-text (and I found very many), I removed these with the utmost care. To this codex, I promise, with God as my witness, that I added or changed nothing at all, which did not clearly appear to have been added, changed or deleted from the text after my examination of some old codex.<sup>1190</sup>

Erasmus was rarely so precise in his terminology, and he was not so precise when describing his editorial work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1191</sup> Gadolo expressed many other ideas that

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<sup>1189</sup> Edoardo Barbiere, *Le Bibbie italiane del Quattrocento e del Cinquecento* (Milano: Editrice Bibliografica Viale Vittorio Veneto, 1992), 31.

<sup>1190</sup> Introductory letter to Francis Piccolomini in 1495 Vulgate, f. 2r: Conquisivi itaque mihi haud parvo certe labore omnes iam antea impressos sacre scripture libros et manu scriptos ad quinque numer. Et percurrens codicem quo erant pro archetypo usuri, ubicumque aliquid vel errati vel dubii apparebat, diligentissime singulos codices inspectavi. Et que ex his in eo codice errata inveni (inveni autem quam plurima) accuratissime sustuli, in quibus illud deo teste, profiteor, me nihil penitus addidisse aut immutasse, quod non ex aliquo antiquo codice aut addendum aut mutandum oblitterandum ve manifeste visum fuerit.

<sup>1191</sup> Also, I have not yet found such precise language in his forewords to the 1516 Froben *New Testament*. See, for example, his letter to Leo X about the 1516 Froben *New Testament* in Allen 446, 53-67: Novum Testamentum simul et Graece et Latine aeditum, a nobis recognitum vna cum Annotationibus nostris iampridem in lucem exiit faustissimi tui nominis auspiciis. Quod opus an omnibus probetur nescio; certe hactenus a probatissimis ac primariis theologis probari comperio, cum primis autem ab incomparabili antistite D. Christophoro episcopo Basiliensi, quo teste liber excusus est. Nec enim hoc labore veterem ac vulgo receptam aeditionem convellimus, sed alicubi depravatam emendamus, aliquot locis obscuram illustramus;

we might call typical of the textual-critical principles which Erasmus and other Froben editors later espoused. He complained in this introductory letter that bungling printers had ‘made mincemeat’ of Jerome’s forewords to the books of the Bible. Therefore, for the 1495 Bible Gadolo claimed to have taken especial care to restore to their first state ‘from ancient codexes and from other works of the same author and from other ‘most clear evidence’ (*evendentissimis rationibus*).<sup>1192</sup> In his later work for the Gregorii brothers’ 1497-1498 edition of Jerome’s commentaries on the Bible, Gadolo put forward similar textual-critical ideas in his introductory letters.<sup>1193</sup> In one of these he discussed at length the possibility that Jerome’s commentary on a work entitled the *Parable of Salomon* was genuine and expressed doubts about the genuineness of some of Jerome’s explanations of the Psalms.<sup>1194</sup> Gadolo patiently explained to readers the development of the four different Psalters then known to the Latin Church and clearly demonstrated an historical understanding of how these were created, drawing from a thorough knowledge of Jerome’s letters and commentaries.<sup>1195</sup> When

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idque non ex animi mei somniis nec illotis, vt aiunt, manibus, sed partim ex vetustissimorum codicum testimoniis, partim ex eorum sententia quorum et doctrinam et sanctimoniam ecclesiastica comprobauit autoritas, nempe Hieronymi, Hilarii, Ambrosii, Augustini, Chrysostomi. Cyrilli: semper interim parati aut modeste rationem reddere si quid reete docuimus, aut libenter corrigere sicubi imprudentes, vt homines, lapsi sumus.

<sup>1192</sup> 1495 Vulgate, f. 2r: ...voluique potius aliqua que mihi aliter scribi debere videbantur intacta relinquere quam proprio nitens sensu sine auctore corrigere, exceptis Hieronymi prologis in quos inveni impressores carnificinam exercuisse, atque in eis multa addita multa dempta, haud pauco uno immutata. Quos tum ex antiquis codicibus tum ex aliis eius auctoris operibus, tum etiam evidentissimis rationibus pristinae (ut puto) restitui integritati quae ita esse quicumque codices contulerit facile perspicet.

<sup>1193</sup> Dill I, 56.

<sup>1194</sup> 1497-1498 Venetian (folio to be verified at BAV): Invenimus optime lector hos tres libros super Salomonis proverbialia Hieronymi titulo praenotatos. Titulo tamen non usquaque confidentes, eos perlegimus diligenter, singula examusim pensiculantes. Nonnulla fateor insunt quae cogeant nos subvereri ne non essent Hieronymi, sed alterius, et maxime Bedae. Haec tamen ut Hieronymo adiudicari debeant, clare videntur efficere. Nam in decretalium libro, capitulum *Ne innitaris purdientiae tuae*, de constitutionibus, et capitulum *Nam et ego*. De verborum significatione, sunt excerpta ex his libris. 1497-98 Venetian: Alia autem super aliquibus psalmis expositio, vel aliae, si plures inveniantur, vel non sunt Hieronymi (ad tamen ipse non ausim affirmare) vel dicemus eum, praeter hanc compendiosiore super totum psalterium expositionem, scripsisse prolixius super aliquibus psalmis.

<sup>1195</sup> 1497-1498 Venetian: Ne variae psalmodum translationes te conturbent. Debes scire lector optime, quod ad latinos quattuor per temporum intervalla psalterii translationes emanarunt. Nam ante Hieronymum, latini habebant illud secundum quod erat apud graecos in LXX interpretibus, qui vetus testamentum de Hebraeo Graecum fecerant. Eum quia vel interpretis imperitia vel vitio scriptorum multis erroribus scatebat, ipse Hieronymus iuxta graecos illud emendavit. Succedente deinde tempore idem Hieronymus gloriosus, ter psalterium in latinum transtulit. Primo iuxta LXX interpretaetes, cui addidit haud pauca quae in Hebraeis

treating the development of the Psalter *Iuxta Hebraeos*, Gadolo retold the story of how Jerome was compelled to write *Iuxta Hebraeos* because of his arguments with Jews, who mocked the inaccuracy of ‘almost every word’ of the Psalter that he was using at the time.<sup>1196</sup> Showing appreciation for the *Hebraica veritas*, Gadolo used the same vocabulary of corruption inherited from Jerome when described the textual corruption of the Psalms, victim to the ignorance of translators (*interpretis imperitia*) and to scribes’ mistakes (*vitio scriptorum*).<sup>1197</sup> Gadolo expressed great regret that he could find ‘hardly any exemplars’ of Jerome’s explanation of the Psalms and that those which he had found were ‘so full of mistakes that it was difficult, if not almost impossible, to restore them to their true state’.<sup>1198</sup> After having searched ‘most diligently’ for this work, however, Gadolo’s printers only turned up one exemplar on the even-numbered Psalms that ‘seemed most authoritative and faithful to us on account of its age and its beauty’.<sup>1199</sup> To some extent, we can see Gadolo as representative of newer scholarly movements in Venice that emphasized accuracy and faithfulness in history and in hagiography.<sup>1200</sup> When Erasmus came to Venice in 1508, he was entering a scholarly environment in which ideas of textual criticism and editing that he forcefully defended against critics in the 1510s were already well-known to humanist scholars, both religious and lay. Among such scholars the textual-critical principles that

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voluminibus et aliis interpraetibus habebantur, et LXX praetermiserant, ea asterico adnotantes. Non nulla quoque quae LXX addiderant, et apud Hebraeos non habebantur obello in linea praenotata ea quasi iugulante notavit. Et istud fuit appellatum psalterium romanum, eo quod sancti Petri ecclesia, primum coeperit uti illa translatione.

<sup>1196</sup> 1497-1498 Venetian: Secundo fecit aliam translationem iuxta hebraicam veritatem. Nam cum Sophronius frequenter cum Hebraeis disputaret, et quaedam de psalterio pro domino salvatore testimonia praeferret, atque ab eis saepe, et per singulos poene sermones, sibi cum derisione ingereretur, non ita esse in Hebraeo. Ille iusta commotus indignatione, studiosissime Hieronymus rogavit, inpulitque, ut sibi psalterium iuxta hebreorum sensum verteret in Latinum. Et hoc dictum est psalterium Hieronymi, iuxta hebraicam veritatem.

<sup>1197</sup> 1497-1498 Venetian: Ea qua vel interpretis imperitia vel vitio scriptorum multis erroribus scatebat, ipse Hieronymus iuxta graecos illud emendavit.

<sup>1198</sup> 1497-1498 Venetian: De expositione autem Hieronymi super psalterium, illud dixerim, vehementer dolendum esse, tam pauca, ac poene nulla inveniri exemplaria, et ea quidem mendis ita plena, ut difficile sit, ac ferme impossibile pristinae integritati restituere.

<sup>1199</sup> 1497-1498 Venetian: Nam cum impraessores diligentissime hoc opus quaesierint, et in quasdam expositiones super quosdam psalmos inciderint. Istud unicum invenerunt super omnes integro numero psalmos, quod et vetustate et sui pulchritudine, plurimum apud nos auctoritatis et fidei invenit.

<sup>1200</sup> Cécile Caby, ‘Bernardino Gadolo ou les débuts de l’historiographie camaldule’, 241.

Poliziano had announced with considerable exactness in his *Miscellanies* were not likely to be controversial. What is more, these ideas were readily available to them, since Aldus had included the *Miscellanies* in his well-organized and comprehensive 1498 edition of Poliziano's *Opera omnia*.<sup>1201</sup>

By working with Aldus on the 1508 *Adages*, Erasmus was initiated into a select group of internationally famous scholars, such as Poliziano and Pietro Bembo, who had worked directly and closely with the master-printer Aldus on a major project.<sup>1202</sup> In 1516, Erasmus and the Froben editors undertook to do for Jerome what Aldus had done for many important writers of the Greek and Latin past; to wit, to put his works into accessible, convenient, well-organized and more correct editions. Johannes Amerbach began printing about 1476, long before Aldus did,<sup>1203</sup> but he later bought 'an almost complete range of the Classical and neo-Classical works' that Aldus had printed.<sup>1204</sup> What is more, Froben's business-partner Wolfgang Lachner was an importer and distributor of Aldine editions in northern Europe.<sup>1205</sup> Froben's 1513 reprint of the 1508 *Adages* was clearly meant to imitate Aldus' work as closely as possible while at the same time aspiring to better accuracy.<sup>1206</sup> The 1516 Froben Jerome *Edition* would likely have turned out a much different work if Erasmus not had the privilege first to work and to learn at the Aldine press. Taking many of Aldus' achievements and applying them to Jerome's works, Erasmus and the Froben editors were able to create

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<sup>1201</sup> See Aldo Manuzio editore 1, 25-26.

<sup>1202</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 113.

<sup>1203</sup> Charles William Heckethorn, *The Printers of Basel* (London: Unwin Brothers, Gresham Press, 1897), 27.

<sup>1204</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 271.

<sup>1205</sup> *Contemporaries* 2, 279-280.

<sup>1206</sup> See Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 242-243 for a side-by-side comparison of pages from the 1508 Aldine and 1513 Froben editions of the *Adages*. See the title-page of 1513 Froben edition of Erasmus' *Adages*: Illud neutique silendum nobis videtur, qui id operis in gratiam studiosorum excudimus, quin testemur (et si id re ipsa pateat) summa nos diligentia in hoc opere usos, ut ne transversum quidem unguem (quod aiunt) ab exemplari discederemus, nisi illustrium autorum Graecis exemplaribus ad hoc inducti, in quibus sinceriores lectionem nonnunquam comperimus. Haec ratio quare nonnulla immutaverimus. Quod si transversiones inversionesve literarum et caetera id genus levicula menda nonnunquam occurrerint, ut benevoli lectores conniveant precamur.

monuments of Patristic scholarship that were as important to contemporary scholarship as Aldus' Greek editions. Erasmus' ten-month 'apprenticeship' with Aldus and his considerable exposure to his printing methods and to contemporary Italian scholarship helped to set the 1516 *Edition* apart from those preceding it.

Throughout Germany, in later years the Frobens were hailed, and hailed themselves, as Aldus' heirs.<sup>1207</sup> In his adage *Festina lente*, Erasmus added praise of the Frobens to the 1515 edition of the *Adages* and directly compared their efforts to Aldus': 'And what Aldus was attempting in Italy...that Johann Froben attempts across the Alps, with no less zeal than Aldus and not wholly without success but, it cannot be denied, with less than equal profit.'<sup>1208</sup> Notwithstanding the close-mindedness that he saw in many Germans, Erasmus believed that with proper support, Froben and his works would be able to live up to Aldus' achievements and have similar an effect on contemporary learning and society. In words that, once again, might resonate among humanist scholars in today's institutions of higher learning, Erasmus solicited patronage for Froben as Aldus' heir north of the Alps, making reference to the Froben's serpent and dove device and Aldus' dolphin and anchor:

And our grandees are so far from helping the cause of good literature by their generosity that they think no money so irretrievably wasted as what is spent on such good purposes; nor do they approve of anything at all from which they get no pecuniary return. If only the princes on our side of the Alps encouraged liberal studies in the open-handed way one finds in Italy, the Froben serpents would not be much worse off than the Aldine dolphin. Aldus, making haste slowly, has acquired as much gold as he has reputation, and richly deserves both. Froben holds his staff upright with no purpose in view except the public good, he never swerves from the innocence of his doves, and expresses the wisdom of serpents more in his badge than his behaviour; and so he is richer in reputation than in coin.<sup>1209</sup>

<sup>1207</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 313.

<sup>1208</sup> ASD II-3, 22, 380-385: Quod Aldus moliebatur apud Italos (nam ipse concessit in fata, quanquam gratiosi nominis titulo adhuc commendatur officina), hoc Ioannes Froben molitur apud Cisalpinos non minore studio quam Aldus nec prorsus infelicitur, sed, quod negari non potest, impari lucro. Si causam requiras, multis hanc unam esse puto, quod non est idem ingeniorum candor apud nos, qui est apud Italos, sane quod ad rem attinet litterariam.

<sup>1209</sup> ASD II-3, 24, 420-429: Magnates autem adeo non adiuvant sua benignitate rem literariam, ut existiment nullam pecuniam perire perditius, quam quae in tales usus consumitur; neque quicquam omnino placet illis, unde non vectigal aliquod tollitur. Quod si pari candore principes Cisalpini prosequerentur honesta studia cum Italis, Frobeniani serpentes non tantum abessent ab opibus delphinis Aldini. Ille lente festinans non minus auri sibi peperit quam nominis, utroque dignus; Frobenius, dum baculum semper erectum gerit, non alio spectans



Erasmus exaggerated Aldus' fortune and success in Italy, but by this time Erasmus had become a great publicist, as Aldus once was. Lowry has noted that in the forewords to his editions addressed to some of the greatest and most powerful men of the age, 'Aldus had broadcast throughout Europe' many of the humanist projects especially dear to Erasmus, such as 'the improvement of society through education, the printing and study of the Bible in all three ancient languages' and 'the establishment of specialized colleges', and all of this when 'Erasmus was still an almost unknown wanderer in Paris and Oxford'.<sup>1210</sup> According to Lowry, the careful and remarkable introductory letter to the 1513 Plato edition, which Aldus had planned to publish since the late 1490s, 'is one of the most comprehensive statements of the humanist position' found outside Erasmus' works.<sup>1211</sup> In other forewords Aldus consistently promoted the spread of humanist learning and of Latin and Greek good letters.<sup>1212</sup> Erasmus had long understood the importance of personal patronage and prestige, but at Aldus' press he saw first-hand how the right kinds of patronage could translate into renown for the printer and for his press. Owing to this renown, Aldus commanded respect among scholars across Europe and was therefore able successfully to promote Classical literature and to defend its worth.<sup>1213</sup> Erasmus often sought out patronage before 1508, but after his time with Aldus, Erasmus took the pursuit of patronage to another level, knowing that the right men's endorsement could make all the difference in selling books, in silencing his critics and in spreading his messages. Right from the beginning of his work with Aldus, Erasmus included a poem in praise of England's Henry VII in the 1507 *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia* edition. Later Erasmus dedicated the 1516 Jerome *Edition* to the Archbishop of

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quam ad publicam utilitatem, dum a columbina simplicitate non recedit, dum serpentum prudentiam magis exprimit insigniis suis quam factis, fama potius dives est quam re.

<sup>1210</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 305.

<sup>1211</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 205.

<sup>1212</sup> See Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio editore*, volume 1, 39-40.

<sup>1213</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 205; 302-303. See Aldus' introduction to the 1513 edition of Plato's works in Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio editore*, volume 2, 120-123.

Canterbury and the 1516 Froben *New Testament* to Pope Leo X, in addition to a concerted ‘press campaign’ for these and for other upcoming Froben editions. The publicity that Erasmus developed and pursued for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* mirrored in many ways Aldus’ self-promotion through his forewords and through his impressive range of contacts throughout Italy.

Even the best humanist scholarship needed good press and patronage. It is important to understand that Aldus’ enterprise was not a lonely outpost of humanism in a mostly hostile environment, but rather an important part of contemporary Venetian social, scholarly and religious life, ‘a powerful organization underwritten by one of the most successful publishers of the age and the nephew of the titular head of the Venetian state’.<sup>1214</sup> Rich and powerful men and women in Venice and throughout Italy and Europe, such as Pierfrancesco Barbarigo, Alberto Pio, Lucrezia Borgia and close associates of the Fugger family, supported Aldus’ press and scholarly work.<sup>1215</sup> Erasmus’ association with Aldus likely smoothed his way later in 1509 into the world of prelates at Rome such as Cardinals Grimani, Riario and Giovanni de’ Medici.<sup>1216</sup> The support of the rich and the powerful helped not only to sell editions, it helped Aldus, and later Erasmus, gain easier access to better texts at a time when private libraries were far more important than public collections.<sup>1217</sup> Although Erasmus may have exaggerated the size and the importance of Aldus’ personal library,<sup>1218</sup> through Aldus’ connections Erasmus had access to a treasure-trove of Greek volumes made available to Aldus.<sup>1219</sup> Thanks to doors opened by Aldus’ introductions to Venetian libraries and scholars,

<sup>1214</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 84-85. Grendler, *Aldus Manutius*, 15-16.

<sup>1215</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 75; 84; 98; 203. See Aldo Manuzio e l’ambiente, 24-25.

<sup>1216</sup> Preserved Smith, *Erasmus* (Ungar Publishing: New York, 1962), 113-114.

<sup>1217</sup> For example, the Venetian senator Daniele Renier, a man said to be most learned in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, gave manuscripts to Aldus. See *La stampa greca*, 14. Kenney calls the sixteenth century the golden age of private libraries. See Kenney, *Classical Text*, 77.

<sup>1218</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 61. See ASD II-5, 36, 378-385.

<sup>1219</sup> De Nolhac, *Érasme en Italie*, 51-52.

Erasmus was able to put together relatively quickly the monumental 1508 edition of the *Adages*.<sup>1220</sup> Writing in 1515 to Cardinal Grimani about the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus admitted that he first thought to go back to Italy in order to prepare an edition of Jerome: ‘Left to myself, I saw clearly enough that Italy, with the resources of its libraries and its commanding position, would be invaluable for the publication of my work.’<sup>1221</sup> It is clear that up to his departure for Basel, Erasmus was strongly considering going back to work with Aldus,<sup>1222</sup> but wars and instability in Italy, Aldus’ own uncertain position after his financial ruin,<sup>1223</sup> Froben’s skilful 1513 edition of the *Adages* and the considerable work that other Froben editors had already carried out for the 1516 *Edition* drew Erasmus, in the end, to Basel.

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<sup>1220</sup> See Beatus Rhenanus’ 1540 Letter to Charles V in Allen, volume I, 61, 170-186. See Margolin, ‘Fêtes vénitiennes’, 22 See also Luigi Firbo, ‘Erasmus da Rotterdam a Torino’, in *Studi Piemontesi* 10 (1981): 240.

<sup>1221</sup> Allen 334, 120-126: Equidem perspiciebam Italiam et bibliothecarum auxiliis et regionis autoritate ad operis aeditionem magno vsui futuram, sed commodum offendi Basileae quosdam ad id operis accinctos, imo iam aggressos; praecipue Iohannem Frobenium, cuius et arte et impendio magna ex parte res agitur; nec non treis doctissimos iuuenes fratres Amorbachios, Hebraicarum quoque litterarum pulchre doctos: atque his litteris non paucis in locis vtitur Hieronymus.

<sup>1222</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 92.

<sup>1223</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 160-167.

## PART II: CHAPTER X

### ERASMUS AND THE FROBEN EDITORS

Toward the end of 1500 Erasmus announced his project to edit Jerome in a letter addressed to an otherwise unknown Greverade. ‘I have long had a burning desire to write a commentary on the letters of Jerome’, he wrote, ‘and some god is now firing my spirit and impelling me to dare to contemplate this massive enterprise, never before attempted by anyone’.<sup>1224</sup> A few months later, in spring 1501, Erasmus wrote from Paris to his friend at the ancient and now defunct Saint Bertin’s Abbey, Anthony of Bergen.<sup>1225</sup> He described again his project to edit Jerome and to explain his works with commentaries. In order to undertake this goal responsibly, Erasmus believed that he needed to learn Greek and therefore hired at considerable cost a Greek refugee, George Hermonymus, to tutor him.<sup>1226</sup> By that summer, however, Erasmus had already left behind these tutorials and made his way to the Low Countries owing to an outbreak of the plague at Paris.<sup>1227</sup> From these first surviving testimonies until 1511, we have little evidence about Erasmus’ ‘burning desire’ to edit Jerome. Between his years in Italy and his first stay in Basel, Erasmus spent about five years in England, where he sped from Rome in summer 1509 upon the accession to the throne of England of the young king thought to have a humanist heart, Henry VIII.<sup>1228</sup> After about two years in and near London, including a stay at Thomas More’s house, Erasmus fled to

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<sup>1224</sup> Allen 141, 16-19: *Flagrat iam olim mihi incredibili ardore animus Hieronymianas epistolas commentariis illustrandi, et nescio quis deus mihi pectus accendit agitque ut rem tantam et a nullo hactenus tentatam audeam animo concipere.*

<sup>1225</sup> Our main source for information about Anthony of Bergen are Erasmus’ many letters to him. See *Contemporaries* 1, 66.

<sup>1226</sup> Allen 149, 56-68. See *Scribes and Scholars*, 158-163.

<sup>1227</sup> See introductory notes to Allen 153.

<sup>1228</sup> Allen 104; Allen 215.

Cambridge from an outbreak of the plague at London in August 1511.<sup>1229</sup> Through the offices of friends and colleagues he soon took up lodging at Queen's College.<sup>1230</sup> He spent about three years teaching and studying at the University of Cambridge, where he was the fourth holder of the Lady Margaret Professorship of Divinity.<sup>1231</sup> At the latest by November 1511, Erasmus had taken up work on Jerome again.<sup>1232</sup> In letters from this time on we often see detailed evidence of his project to edit Jerome, along with the New Testament and Seneca.<sup>1233</sup> It remained unclear, however, where Erasmus was going to print such works. For his Jerome project he was engaged at some point with his long-time printer Josse Bade at Paris, but all the while he seems to have been looking for another press.<sup>1234</sup>

Throughout his time in England, Erasmus showed noteworthy interest in Italian events, entertained thoughts about escaping to Italy and expressed regrets about having ever left there in the first place.<sup>1235</sup> We must leave room for flattery in Erasmus' press campaign letter to Cardinal Grimani, in which he claimed that he had thought Italy ideal for his work on Jerome.<sup>1236</sup> It is nonetheless likely that he did seriously consider returning to Italy before he chose instead to head towards Basel in summer 1514. Along his way up the Rhine, crowds, scholars and political leaders enthusiastically greeted him.<sup>1237</sup> Owing in large part to the 1508 Aldine *Adages* and to his widely popular *Praise of Folly*,<sup>1238</sup> Erasmus was now famous and beloved in Germany, and he was received as one of its sons during his progress to Basel. Notwithstanding the considerable work that he carried out whilst at Cambridge, Erasmus

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<sup>1229</sup> For more about Thomas More see *Contemporaries* 2, 456-459.

<sup>1230</sup> Dill I, 86.

<sup>1231</sup> Dill I, 90-91

<sup>1232</sup> See Allen 245, 4-7.

<sup>1233</sup> See Allen 264, 13-15: Absolvam castigationem Novi Testamenti; absolvam epistolas divi Hieronymi et, si dabitur otium, emendabo et Senecam. See also Allen 270; Allen 273.

<sup>1234</sup> For a thorough treatment of this period of Erasmus' life and his scholarship at Cambridge and in England, see Dill I, 86-92. For more information about Bade see *Contemporaries* 1, 79-81.

<sup>1235</sup> Allen 240, 28-31.

<sup>1236</sup> Allen 334, 120-134.

<sup>1237</sup> Smith, *Erasmus*, 129-137.

<sup>1238</sup> Smith, *Erasmus*, 125-130.

found his years there disappointing and he often complained about his situation.<sup>1239</sup> All the more so did the enthusiastic welcome of German scholars, citizens and statesmen touch him, and during this time he repeatedly identified himself in his letters as a German.<sup>1240</sup> After a fruitful meeting with members of the Strasburg Literary Society,<sup>1241</sup> Erasmus made his way to Selestat (Schlettstadt), home of a famous Latin School where Beatus Rhenanus (1488-1547), Jakob Wimpfeling (1450-1528) and a host of other contemporary Alsatian humanists and colleagues of Erasmus studied and taught.<sup>1242</sup> For too long Erasmus had been coping with English beer and with wines not to his liking,<sup>1243</sup> so he was delighted when Selestat's magistrates sent him 'three flagons of really excellent wine called "Xenius"', and such flagons as might hold up to ten two-gallon measures'.<sup>1244</sup> Although we can only guess about the varietal, we can be sure of Erasmus' thankfulness since he wrote a poem in honour of 'noble Selestat' which, even if 'hardly elegant' according to his own appraisal, was 'composed on the lyre of gratitude'.<sup>1245</sup> He turned down, however, the city magistrates' invitation to a fine Alsatian dinner, since he was 'in a hurry to start on the work' awaiting him at Basel.<sup>1246</sup> From here Johannes Witz (Sapidus), head of Selestat's Latin School as of 1510,<sup>1247</sup> accompanied him to his destination on the Rhine, where Erasmus first met Johannes Froben and many other scholars involved with the Amerbach-Froben press, including Gerard Lyster, Bruno Amerbach, Ludwig Ber, Johannes Gallinarius, Henricus Glareanus, Uldrich

<sup>1239</sup> Schoeck, *Erasmus of Europe*, 109-125.

<sup>1240</sup> See Erasmus' greeting in Allen 305, 25-28; 148-151; 214-216. For another example see Allen 307, 9-21.

<sup>1241</sup> For his invitation from James Wimpfeling see Allen 302.

<sup>1242</sup> One of the most thorough books about the Latin school is Paul Adam, *L'Humanisme à Sélestat* (Sélestat: Imprimerie Alsatia, 1973). For more about the lives of Beatus and of Wimpfeling see pages 37-50; 51-67.

<sup>1243</sup> Allen 226, 5-6; Allen 285, 3-5.

<sup>1244</sup> Allen 305, 171-175: Ad oppidum Selestadiense, tuam patriam, foeliciter perveni. Ibi continuo primores reipublicae, haud scio cuius indicio, de meo adventu facti certiores, per publicum nuncium treis exquisitissimi vini misere cantaros xenii nomine, sed eos cantaros ut vel decem tricongiis satis esse possint.

<sup>1245</sup> This poem was entitled the *Encomium Selestadii carmine elegiaco per Erasmus Roterodamum*. After praising Selestat's learned scholars and many charms, Erasmus concludes: Haec memor hospitii, tibi carmen panxit Erasmus/ Haud lepida, et grata qualiacunque caeli. For the Latin text and translation into English of this poem see CWE 85, 125-127.

<sup>1246</sup> Allen 305, 175-176: Invitarunt ad prandium in diem posterum, verum excusavi, properans ad hoc negotium in quo nunc sum.

<sup>1247</sup> Adam, *L'Humanisme à Sélestat*, 21.

Zazius and Beatus.<sup>1248</sup> In the near future Erasmus also planned to meet the Bishop of Basel, Christoph of Utenheim, who later became a great admirer of Erasmus and of his work.<sup>1249</sup> In collaboration with learned ‘fellow Germans’ in Froben’s circle, over the next two years, in which he spent several months back in England and the Low Countries,<sup>1250</sup> Erasmus helped to put out ground-breaking editions of the New Testament and of Jerome’s collected works. This is to say nothing of his undertakings for many of the other nineteen editions that Froben published in 1515-1516.<sup>1251</sup> For his 2004 doctoral thesis, Ueli Dill gathered with painstaking attention most of the readily available details and sources that we have about the composition of Erasmus’ commentaries for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. The purpose of this chapter will be to sum up Dill’s most important findings and to interpret them as well as other evidence in order to describe the work for the 1516 *Edition* that scholars at Basel had carried out both before and after Erasmus’ arrival. We can then more ably undertake what Dill called for in his thesis: ‘an investigation of the contents, the construction and the reasoning behind’ Erasmus’ commentary for the *Edition*.<sup>1252</sup>

Dill rightly emphasizes that the 1516 Jerome *Edition* was a ‘happy combination’ of two editorial projects independently conceived and pursued.<sup>1253</sup> After describing his efforts to correct Jerome’s letters in his 1515 press campaign letter to Leo X, Erasmus praised his forebears at the Froben press, including Reuchlin, Cuno, Beatus and the Amerbach brothers.<sup>1254</sup> ‘On Jerome’s other works, which I have not taken up myself’, Erasmus wrote, ‘although as time serves I lend a hand, several distinguished scholars have been toiling for

<sup>1248</sup> Allen 305, 179-221. For more on this community see, for example, *Johann Froben* (Basel: Gewerbemuseum Basel, 1927-28), 10.

<sup>1249</sup> Allen 305, 177-247; BWBR 81, 11-12: Berus Tannis nunc agit, oppido vicino. Christophorus Basiliensis episcopus dici non potest quanti te faciat. See Allen 413, 18-22.

<sup>1250</sup> For more information on this journey see Dill I, 192-196.

<sup>1251</sup> For a comprehensive list of Froben’s publications during these years see Heckethorn, *Printers of Basel*, 96-99.

<sup>1252</sup> Dill I, 2.

<sup>1253</sup> Dill I, 1. For a thorough description of the ‘fusion’ of these two projects see Dill I, 179-185.

<sup>1254</sup> Allen 335, 303-324.

some time now.<sup>1255</sup> Whereas Erasmus spent about a year in Basel working on the 1516 *Edition*, other scholars at the Froben press had been working on it since 1507,<sup>1256</sup> when Johannes Amerbach first launched his project to make a collected works of Jerome shortly after having brought out his 1506 edition of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (*On the City of God*).<sup>1257</sup> Until his death in 1513, Amerbach enthusiastically undertook and oversaw work on what later became the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1258</sup> In the words of his son Bruno, Johannes Amerbach 'was so enthusiastic about restoring those holy and ancient writers of the Christian religion that he heeded neither the cost nor his already advancing age'.<sup>1259</sup> It is clear from the Amerbachs' and from Reuchlin's correspondence that the Jerome *Edition* ranked among Johannes Amerbach's foremost concerns for over seven years. For the *Edition* he recruited scholars, and sought after texts in monastic libraries throughout the Holy Roman Empire and gathered prior printed editions.<sup>1260</sup> As early as 1507 the Franciscan Hebraist Conrad Pellikan was at Basel working on the *Edition*.<sup>1261</sup> Although Johannes Amerbach had first planned to publish the *Edition* soon after the appearance of his 1506 Augustine edition,<sup>1262</sup> to bring Jerome back to life took longer than he had foreseen, possibly because of Pellikan's sudden departure from Basel in 1508.<sup>1263</sup> We see evidence of Pellikan's early work for the *Edition* in the many comments that he wrote in Latin, and perhaps in Hebrew, in the margins of Antonio Miscomini's 1476 Venetian edition of Jerome's letters now at the Basel University

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<sup>1255</sup> Allen 335, 300-303.

<sup>1256</sup> Dill I, 163.

<sup>1257</sup> Strictly speaking the 1506 edition was not an *opera omnia* since it omitted several works that Amerbach had already printed in the 1490s, including Augustine's sermons and letters. The first true *opera omnia* of Augustine's works was therefore the 1528-1529 edition that Erasmus edited with Hieronymus Froben, who had inherited the Froben press upon the death of his father Johannes on 27 October 1527.

<sup>1258</sup> For a good description and many sources about Amerbach's activities, see Dill I, 163-164.

<sup>1259</sup> See AK 551, 7-10: ...nam eo planissime erat animo erga restituendos sacros illos ac veteres Christianae religionis auctores, ut huius rei pecuniariae nec aetati iam ingravescenti parceret.

<sup>1260</sup> See AK 440, 1-14; AK 460, 16-19; AK 488; RBW 174, 30-44.

<sup>1261</sup> Dill I, 133-136.

<sup>1262</sup> AK 335, 18-25.

<sup>1263</sup> Dill I, 127-128.



library.<sup>1264</sup> Despite Pellikan's departure for his hometown Ruffach in 1508, which greatly worried Johannes Amerbach,<sup>1265</sup> his editors had clearly made headway since 1507, and Pellikan continued to work on the *Edition* by correspondence.<sup>1266</sup> In a letter to his friend Michael Hummelberg dating from summer 1510,<sup>1267</sup> a time when there seems to have been no contact between Erasmus and the team of scholars working at Basel on the 1516 *Edition*, Bruno Amerbach described the *Edition* as the 'rebirth' (*resuscitatio*) of Jerome, a refrain that Erasmus later took up in his letters publicizing the *Edition*.<sup>1268</sup> After Pellikan's departure, Johannes Amerbach asked the prior of Freiburg's Carthusian monastery, Gregory Reisch (1467-1525), to edit Jerome's letters and to oversee the direction of the whole project for the 1516 *Edition*.<sup>1269</sup> We know that Reisch, for a time confessor to the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, had already come up with plans for this project before November 1509.<sup>1270</sup> For this endeavour Johannes Amerbach also wooed and hired other scholars known to us, and many more collaborators lower on the totem-pole of the early-modern printing-press who remain unknown. After describing the hard time that he was having with the Greek and Hebrew transcriptions in Jerome's commentaries, whose accuracy he did not trust in the exemplars which he had on hand, whether manuscript or printed, Johannes Amerbach also asked Reuchlin,<sup>1271</sup> a renowned Hebraist and an accomplished scholar of Greek language and literature, to help him. 'If you do not help me', he wrote, 'I know no one else in Germany that

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<sup>1264</sup> Dill I, 134. The shelf-mark of this edition at the University of Basel Library is: FG IV 2.

<sup>1265</sup> Dill I, 128.

<sup>1266</sup> Dill I, 133-136.

<sup>1267</sup> *Contemporaries* 2, 213-214.

<sup>1268</sup> AK 441, 1-5 (Bruno Amerbach to Michael Hummelberg on 20 August 1510): Bruno Amorbachius Basiliensis Michaeli Humelbergio suo s. Divus Hieronymus, pro cuius vita vel potius (ut ita loquar) resuscitatione interdiu noctique laboramus, ita omne meum tempus sibi vendicat, ut ne subcissivas quidam horas amicis impendere possim. Haec unica, mi Michael, diuturni mei silentii causa.

<sup>1269</sup> For more on Reisch see Dill I, 152-157. See also *Deutscher Humanismus (1480-1520) Verfasserlexikon*, volume 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 548-566.

<sup>1270</sup> AK 429, 3-16. For more on Reisch see *Contemporaries* 3, 137. See introductory notes to Allen 308.

<sup>1271</sup> Allen 335, 300-307. For more on Reuchlin see *Contemporaries* 3, 144-150.

can help me, and on this account the work will likely remained unfinished'.<sup>1272</sup> Later in the summer of 1510 Reuchlin came to Basel for a few weeks, after still more coaxing, in order to help with the *Edition*.<sup>1273</sup> Far more important than this short trip to Basel, for years Reuchlin also undertook considerable work for the *Edition* by correspondence from Stuttgart, as we shall see below. Johannes Cuno, an expert hand at Greek, likewise made his way to Basel in 1510 in order to work with the scholarly community at the Amerbach press, where he took a leading role in creating the *Edition* until his death in February 1513.<sup>1274</sup> In a *scholion* to the life of Josephus included in a work entitled *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* (*On Ecclesiastical Writers*) and often attributed to Jerome, but which Erasmus classed as a worthwhile but spurious text, Erasmus praised Cuno's work:

Johannes Cuno of Nuremberg, a man most faithful and careful in restoring the texts, restored the Greek title before me using the works of Sophronius [Jerome] and of Suidas. He deserved to live longer for the sake of good letters and he could have lived longer had he not entered into that kind of life, in which this kind of study is not usually honoured...<sup>1275</sup>

Erasmus' critique of Cuno's engagement with the Dominicans might reflect his own prejudices more than the truth of Cuno's situation. Men in religious orders figured prominently among the vibrant scholarly community of contemporary Basel and the editors of the 1516 *Edition*.<sup>1276</sup> There can be no doubt that at Basel, as at Venice, Erasmus profited from and made important contributions to this community, enriched as it was by great scholars such as Ludwig Ber, Johann Amerbach's trusted friend,<sup>1277</sup> and Sebastian Brant,

<sup>1272</sup> AK 420, 16-18: Si autem me derelinquas, neminem scio in Alemannia, qui me iuvare posset, et forte propter hoc opus infectum permanebit.

<sup>1273</sup> Dill I, 141. See AK 441, 11-13. See AK 420.

<sup>1274</sup> Dill I, 151-152. See AK 446, 12-16.

<sup>1275</sup> See Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 268. See 1516 *Edition* I, f. 139r: Qui inscribitur *περί αυτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ*). Id est de imperatrice sapientia, seu prudentia. Nam id interpretamentum, quod circumfertur in vulgatis exemplaribus, de potentia dicendi, nescio quis adiecit. Caeterum Graecum titulum et ante nos restituit ex Sophronio et Suida Cono Norimbergensis, vir in pervestigandis iis quae ad restituendos auctores pertinent, iuxta fidelis ac diligens et omnino dignus qui diutius vixisset bonis litteris, ac diutius vivere poterat, nisi in hoc vitae genus incidisset, in quo huic studiorum generi non multum honoris haberi solet, quod haud magnopere faciat *προς τὰ ἄλφια*.

<sup>1276</sup> See Allen 305, 170-221. See Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 263-275. D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 38; 49.

<sup>1277</sup> See AK 270. See also AK 149, both the letter and the editorial notes.

author of the best-selling *Ship of Fools* (*Stultifera Navis*).<sup>1278</sup> The Selestadian Beatus Rhenanus (1485-1547), later Erasmus' trusted friend and biographer, had also been working on the 1516 *Edition* at Basel since 1511, along with another townsman Johannes Witz.<sup>1279</sup> Originally enticed to the city by the chance to master Greek under Cuno's tutelage,<sup>1280</sup> Beatus played an important role in editing and in publishing many Froben editions from the 1510s, including the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1281</sup> We shall be looking more closely at his work later in this chapter. Once Erasmus had arrived at Basel, he opened up a correspondence with the *Edition*'s erstwhile editor-in-chief, Reisch. It is hard to doubt the sincerity of the latter's gladness at the news of Erasmus' engagements with the *Edition*: 'Most courteous and learned of men, I am delighted that the Jerome we have in hand is to enjoy the benefit of your well-known and authoritative scholarship. I think it providential that the work we had already planned should not see the light until your gifted and experienced hand can elucidate and restore with the skilled tools of criticism what would no doubt remain forever missing or defective or obscured by error.'<sup>1282</sup>

Some scholars contributing to the *Edition* sent in their work by post, as we have seen. Witz seems to have undertaken work for the *Edition* throughout his many movements between Selestat and Basel.<sup>1283</sup> In 1512 Witz, then in Selestat, sent to Boniface Amerbach

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<sup>1278</sup> Among his many collaborations with Amerbach, Brant had undertaken editorial work on the Bible with Nicholas of Lyra's glosses that Johannes Amerbach and Johannes Petri published together in 1498 and again in 1501-1502. See Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 268-269; 287-297. Conrad Leontorius took charge of the last printing of this work in 1506-1508.

<sup>1279</sup> Dill I, 160-161.

<sup>1280</sup> He eventually received instruction from Cuno. See BWBR 37, 1-5.

<sup>1281</sup> An introduction to Rhenanus' work for Froben, and in general, is D'Amico's *Theory and Practice*. See especially pages 39-70. See also James Hirstein, ed. *Beatus Rhenanus: Lector et Éditeur des Textes Anciens* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

<sup>1282</sup> Allen 309, 1-6: Humanissime ac doctissime Erasme, gaudeo plurimum pervulgatam tuam auctoritatem Hieronymo nostro accessisse; credo divinitus ita factitatum, ut praeconceptus labor non prius in publicum prodiret, donec exercitativissimum ingenium tuum ea quae vel manca vel detruncata et erroribus obfusa haud dubium semper manerent, castigationis lima illustraret ac restitueret.

<sup>1283</sup> AK 245, 22-42.

certain ‘corrections’ of Jerome for which Boniface had asked.<sup>1284</sup> Writing to Johannes Amerbach from Selestat in 1512, Witz’s colleague Sebastian Sytz also promised to send his corrections of a problematic example of Jerome’s works, which he claimed to have ‘bored through, edited and perfected as though on a Beroaldine anvil’. In this example Sytz was making reference to Filippo Beroaldo the Elder’s (1453-1505) enormous and detailed commentary on Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*.<sup>1285</sup> In these cases we do not know if Sytz and Witz had worked on Jerome’s letters, on his commentaries or on both, but we can remark that they were working together on materials for the *Edition*. For his work on Jerome’s commentaries for the *Edition*, Reuchlin used for his base-text the 1497-1498 Venetian edition, the only existing printed edition of Jerome’s commentaries before the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1286</sup> The Basel University Library still has the copy that Reuchlin corrected and which served as the *Druckvorlage* for the *Edition*, its pages covered with smudged ink and riddled with printers’ marks.<sup>1287</sup> In addition to Cuno’s marks in the margins and on the text in Greek and in Latin,<sup>1288</sup> Reuchlin’s corrections in Latin and in Hebrew appear in the margins of this edition and separately in a bound codex of handwritten notes that he mailed to the Amerbach brothers from Stuttgart.<sup>1289</sup>

Already in 1511 Reuchlin had apparently sent both the *Druckvorlage* and his handwritten corrections of Jerome’s commentaries back to the Amerbachs. Although I was unable to spend much time analyzing Reuchlin’s corrections and comparing the

<sup>1284</sup> AK 473, 19-22.

<sup>1285</sup> AK 474, 30-37: Hieronimum itaque, quem Beroaldina pertusum elimatioremque perfectum incude esse credebas, perlustravi verbatim, crede mihi, pene. Qui nec in margine quam interdum rariusculas et dictiones et sensus (nihilominus in eodem textu habitos) quicquam protulit, graeci autem, quod magis appetebas, nil omnino, et ubi hae Hyeronimianae calcographicae penitus delirant formulae et cassioticis profluunt erroribus, hic tuus elimatissimus; id nostrum Sapidum testor. Quare eundem proximo internuntio triclinio tuo remittam litterario. Salve.

<sup>1286</sup> Dill I, 56-57.

<sup>1287</sup> The shelf-mark of this edition at the Basel University Library is: FL II 1.

<sup>1288</sup> Martin Sicherl, *Johannes Cuno* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1978), 122; 127. For a summary of Cuno’s engagements see 119-130.

<sup>1289</sup> The shelf-mark of this codex at the Basel University Library is: A XII 5.

*Druckvorlage* with the text of Jerome's commentaries found in the 1516 *Edition*, my comparisons of Jerome's forewords to his commentaries on the prophets Malachi and Daniel suggest that the Froben editors for the most part copied the Latin text of the *Druckvorlage* and that Reuchlin's main engagement was therefore to write in the margins his proposals to correct the commentaries' Greek text. This is in line with Reuchlin's own descriptions of his work in a letter to Johannes Amerbach dated 31 August 1512, in which he claimed to have corrected all of the Greek and Hebrew for Jerome's letters but not to have touched the Latin text.<sup>1290</sup> In the codex he sent to the Amerbach brothers from Stuttgart, Reuchlin included many more corrections and additions of Greek as well as instructions on how to work with his hand-written notes and the *Druckvorlage*, which he had already sent back to Basel.<sup>1291</sup>

In his letters to the Amerbachs in 1510-1512, Reuchlin also wrote at length about his work for the *Edition* and his search for copies of Jerome's works.<sup>1292</sup> Early in 1511 he claimed to have finished his work on Jerome's commentaries and to have begun work on his letters:

Whereas I corrected before in Greek, now you see that I have finished what was in Hebrew. For I am sending the twelve minor prophets and Isaiah, as before I sent Ezekiel to you. Therefore you have Saint Jerome's books corrected by me in Greek and in Hebrew on Genesis, on the Twelve Prophets, on Isaiah and on Ezekiel. There is still a little left to do with Daniel. And if ever I had hitherto been able to find near me some old codex of Jerome's commentary on Jeremiah, you would already have this finished, but in the meantime I thought it worthwhile that I begin work on Jerome's letters, *which you gave to me with such care* [Italics added]. Although I do not have an old exemplar of this, I have begun to exercise the strength of my wits and with great work and great effort, I have almost finished the first part of his letters, which is the easiest of all of them when it comes to corrections, and this without help, such that now I despair of being able to do any justice to the rest of the letters without old texts.<sup>1293</sup>

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<sup>1290</sup> RBW 207, 9-12.

<sup>1291</sup> See A XII 5 (page marked '3a'): Nam annotatio mea est secundum folia Venetorum. Primo enim per [sign/mark] cifras noto folia [sign/mark] et per a faciem primam folii et per b faciem secundam eiusdem folii et quamlibet faciem divido in tres partes ideo per p iuxta principium, m iuxta medium [sign/mark], f iuxta finem [sign/mark] et sic servabo ubique. For a transcription see RBW II, page 166, note 2.

<sup>1292</sup> See RBW 172.

<sup>1293</sup> RBW 174, 3-15: Quod ante in Graeco emendavimus, id iam cernis et in Hebraica lingua completum. Mitto enim prophetas minores XII et Isaiam, qui prius Ezechielem ad te misi. Habes igitur libros Sancti Hieronymi per me castigatos tam Graece quam Hebraice super Genesim, super XII prophetas, super Isaiam, super Ezechielem. Parum restat de Daniele. Quodsi uspiam circa nos antiquum aliquem Hieronymi codicem super Ieremiam hactenus invenire potuissem, etiam illum iam haberes absolutum, sed interea putavi me operae precium esse facturum, si opus epistolare aggrederer, *quod ad me tanta cura dedisti*. Quamvis nec eiusdem habeam vetus

About seven months later, in a letter to Johannes Amerbach written from Stuttgart and dated 5 November 1511, Reuchlin claimed to have finished editing all of Jerome's letters:

I have finished Jerome's letters, two parts of which I have sent to Frankfurt for the next book fair. The third part awaits a letter-bearer or the next Lenten fair. It is finished. I think that I have filled up all the empty places with Greek and with Hebrew. But if I have hallucinated and missed something, Cuno our brother will fill it or my Bruno, and also yours, to whom I would now entrust the Greek and Hebrew, if he should be willing, and rightly so.<sup>1294</sup>

Since Reuchlin referred here to three 'parts' (*duas partes, tertia pars*), it is most likely that he was using one of the printed editions based on Lelli's organization.<sup>1295</sup> Erasmus stated that he had relied on Reuchlin's work with Hebrew and with Greek for Jerome's letters while he focused mainly on correcting the Latin text, on separating spurious from genuine letters and on writing commentaries for the latter.<sup>1296</sup> In a letter that he wrote to Reuchlin in spring 1515, Erasmus claimed that he did not want to diminish Reuchlin's contributions and remarked their work had, at the end of the day, been of a different kind:

As regards the publication of Jerome's works, so far am I from wishing to claim the least scrap of your work or your credit for myself, that I would rather transfer to you something of my own. When I took that work in hand, I did not know that you were engaged on the same task, although we have not really the same objective. To Hebrew I make no claim, for I barely set my lips to it. In short, each of us shall have the credit he deserves, and that in the fairest possible way.<sup>1297</sup>

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exemplar, coepi vires exercere ingenii et tanto labore tantoque conatu vix primam eius partem, quae aliarum tamen est omnium castigatu facillima, sine duce consummavi, ut iam desperandum mihi sit de reliquis posse absque vetustis exemplaribus ullum consequi honorem.

<sup>1294</sup> RBW 186, 1-17: Cyrus noster celere iter arripuit; quare non potui ad te pluribus. Nihil tuarum literarum ex nundinis recepi. Credo excidi memoria: iam alterum habes Graecum; id tibi sat est. Complevi epistolare S. Hieronymi, cuius duas partes Francfordiam misi ad nundinas proxime habitas; tertia pars vel baiulum expectat vel alteras quadragesimae nundinas. Consummata est. Puto me omnia loca Graecis Hebraeisque vacua replevisse. Quod si hallucinatus fuerim et aliquid omiserim, resartiet Conon frater noster aut Bruno meus et idem tuus, cui tam Graeca quam Hebraea nunc, si volet, recte credidero. A quibus mihi summopere timendum est, ne laboris mei sibi gloriam praeripiant, ut cum Marone cogar scribere: Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honorem. Sic vos nos vobis. Nunc mitto ad te de Novo testamento, quae restauravi. Restat Psalterium, in quo iam occupor. De Hieronymo super Lucam nihil adhuc instituis; de eo scripsi antea quaerens voluntatem tuam. Hieremiae prototypum in tota Suevia non invenio. Sed ne nihil agam, fretus tua signatura perficiam quoad queam.

<sup>1295</sup> For a description of editions following the 'Lellian' tradition see Dill I, 43-46.

<sup>1296</sup> See Allen 333, 105-138; Allen 334, 178-206; Allen 335, 303-307.

<sup>1297</sup> Allen 324, 27-34.

Reuchlin, however, has since got relatively little credit for restoring the 1516 *Edition*'s text, even though Erasmus made considerable mention of him and of his work in his three 1515 press campaign letters. In these he also very publicly asked Cardinals Riario and Grimani to intercede on Reuchlin's behalf in the ongoing case that Johannes Pfefferkorn had brought against him with the Inquisition.<sup>1298</sup>

Erasmus claimed that to restore Greek to the text of Jerome's letters was one of the 1516 *Edition*'s major accomplishments, and modern scholars have widely seconded his opinion.<sup>1299</sup> Many earlier editions of Jerome did include Greek texts. Although Peter Schöffer offered some Greek letters for his 1465 edition of Cicero's works, his fount only included the letters 'η, θ, κ, ρ, τ, φ, and ω, as well as a form of μ', making for 'unusual results'.<sup>1300</sup> For his 1470 edition of Jerome's letters, therefore, he simply transliterated Greek into Latin letters and explained his reasons for this.<sup>1301</sup> The 1468 Riessinger edition and the 1468 and 1470 Sweynheim and Pannartz editions, however, included printed Greek texts, as did the 1476 Miscomini edition and the 1497 Kessler edition published at Basel. The latter seems to have copied the Greek fount of Johannes Amerbach's 1486 edition of Francesco Filelfo's letters.<sup>1302</sup> None of these prior editions' Greek texts matched the completeness and the beauty of that found in the 1516 *Edition*, but we still await a comparison of prior editions' Greek texts with the latter's.<sup>1303</sup> As for the Hebrew, we may remark here the bizarre fact that the 1516 *Edition* printed passages from the Old Testament which Jerome cited or explained in a Hebrew fount, even though Jerome, it must be emphasized, did not usually write Hebrew words in Hebrew script in his letters. To print Hebrew passages in Jerome's letters and

<sup>1298</sup> See *Contemporaries* 3, 76-77; 146.

<sup>1299</sup> Allen 335, 271-272. See D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 37.

<sup>1300</sup> See *In Aedibus Aldi*, 25-31.

<sup>1301</sup> See Robert Proctor, *The Printing of Greek in the Fifteenth Century* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966), 26.

<sup>1302</sup> Proctor, *Printing of Greek*, 36; 136-137.

<sup>1303</sup> Proctor, *Printing of Greek*, 26-36.

commentaries seems to have been Johannes Amerbach's idea.<sup>1304</sup> Although an impressive and lavish show of printing prowess in an age when few printers had the capacity to print Hebrew, the *Edition*'s inclusion of Hebrew text was actually a *corruption* of Jerome's letters. Modern editions of the letters do not include Hebrew script but follow Jerome's practice of transcribing Hebrew words that Jerome cites in Latin letters.<sup>1305</sup> Although we can only speculate about the reasons for which Johannes Amerbach and his collaborators chose to include Hebrew characters in the text of Jerome's works, in Amerbach's letters to Reuchlin he suggested that by printing Hebrew characters in the Jerome *Edition* he could increase demand for Reuchlin's *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* (*Hebrew Basics*), for whose printing Reuchlin had had to pay in part and whose sales had hitherto proven lack-lustre.<sup>1306</sup> In the foreword to the *Quadruplex Psalterium* found in an appendix to the *Edition*'s eighth volume, and on which Reuchlin worked,<sup>1307</sup> the foreword attributed to Bruno Amerbach suggested to readers having trouble with the original Hebrew that they 'take up the work of that most learned man Johannes Reuchlin, called *Rudimenta Hebraica*'.<sup>1308</sup>

In addition to Reuchlin's work, Reisch and other scholars involved with the *Edition* had already undertaken correction (*castigatio*) of Jerome's letters before Erasmus' arrival at Basel.<sup>1309</sup> In September 1513 another Alsatian humanist, Wolfgang Angst, whilst working for the Selestat-born and Strasburg-based printer Mathias Schürer, contributed to ongoing work on Jerome's letters.<sup>1310</sup> He sent to Basel his guesses about tricky passages in Jerome's *Contra*

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<sup>1304</sup> Dill I, 146.

<sup>1305</sup> Dill I, 145-146.

<sup>1306</sup> AK 335, 1-25. In lines 18-22 Johannes Amerbach explicitly links sales of Johannes Reuchlin's Hebrew grammar with the printing of Hebrew letters for the *Edition*. See AK 420, 18-20. See especially AK 469, 33-45.

<sup>1307</sup> See note 73 above for RBW 186, 1-17.

<sup>1308</sup> See the unmarked folio page directly after 1516 *Edition* VIII, f. 104v.

<sup>1309</sup> Percy Stafford Allen, *Age of Erasmus* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), 56. Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 44-48. Dill I, 142. See also AK 451 from John Reuchlin to John Amerbach, 3-15.

<sup>1310</sup> For details about Angst, see *Contemporaries* 1, 58. See the *addendum* to this chapter for the text and translation of these passages and commentaries. In 1515 we find Angst in Hagenau, where he was working for Schürer and the Froben as a corrector and had already been in correspondence with Erasmus. See Allen 363.



*Rufinum* and *Adversus Iovinianum* following Bruno Amerbach's requests.<sup>1311</sup> From comparing his comments on these passages with Erasmus' *scholia* on the same passage in the 1516 *Edition*, we see that Angst and Erasmus treated the same questions about the text, relied on conjectural emendation (*ope ingenii*) for their solutions and came to different conclusions. It also appears that another collaborator by post, Conrad Leontorius, had undertaken some work on Jerome's letters. A Cistercian monk on assignment to the Beguine community of Engental as of 1505, Leontorius had worked as editor-in-chief of Amerbach's 1506 Augustine edition and was one of Boniface Amerbach's teachers.<sup>1312</sup> We shall be looking more closely at some of his early editorial activity for Johannes Amerbach in the next chapter. In the spring of 1509 Leontorius wrote Johannes Amerbach from his Alsatian home at Engental and asked Amerbach to lend him Reisch's copy of Jerome's works so that he might work with it.<sup>1313</sup> Later that summer Leontorius was working on the Jerome *Edition* together with Reuchlin, using an example of Jerome's works from Hirsau.<sup>1314</sup> Reuchlin bore witness to Leontorius's ongoing work on the *Edition* in late summer 1512.<sup>1315</sup>

Charged with editing Jerome's letters since 1509, by the early 1510s the Carthusian monk Reisch had already undertaken considerable revisions of Jerome's letters for the *Edition*. He went to considerable trouble in order to secure manuscripts from Carthusian communities in German-speaking lands and especially from the Carthusian community at

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Later in 1517 he moved to Basel and worked as a corrector for the Froben press until 1518. See AK 584. In 1515 he was probably working for the Alsatian printer Thomas Anshelmus. See Ernst Kelchner's biography of Angst in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 1 (1875): 461-462. Anshelmus printed an edition of Erasmus' *Adages* in 1514.

<sup>1311</sup> For details about Angst, see *Contemporaries* 1, 58. See the *addendum* to this chapter for the text and translation of these passages and commentaries.

<sup>1312</sup> For information about his activities for the Augustine edition see Victor Scholderer, 'The First Collected Edition of Saint Augustine', in *The Library* 5 (1959): 48. For a brief biography see Ludwig Geiger's entry in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 18 (1883): 315. See AK 275. For more about Leontorius at the Froben press see Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 271-272.

<sup>1313</sup> AK 410, 1-8.

<sup>1314</sup> AK 425, 22-42.

<sup>1315</sup> AK 469, 105-113.

Basel, with which Johannes Amerbach was especially close.<sup>1316</sup> Erasmus' correspondence with Reisch confirms that the latter's work was probably more than 'some preliminary efforts',<sup>1317</sup> even if relatively more work had been done for volumes five through nine of the *Edition*, which were already more or less complete upon Erasmus' arrival.<sup>1318</sup> According to Beatus' later testimony, Erasmus had heard about the Froben editors' work on Jerome before leaving England for Basel.<sup>1319</sup> He also clearly respected and appreciated these editors and their efforts from the beginning. When he opened his correspondence with Reisch in September 1514, he explained in detail many passages that he had encountered as he undertook to correct Jerome's letters at Cambridge and asked Reisch for help: 'I have made many conjectures', Erasmus noted, 'but cannot do everything'.<sup>1320</sup> Although Erasmus had more questions than those that he put forward in this letter, he did not pose them. 'After all', he exclaimed about Jerome's letters, 'what in them is not corrupted?'<sup>1321</sup> In his courteous and competent answer, Reisch asked Erasmus to re-consider his idea to re-organize Jerome's letters and expressed his dissatisfaction with Lelli's commentaries. He also praised Erasmus' efforts to write new commentaries for Jerome's letters, noting that although he had not written any *argumenta* for Jerome's letters, he had undertaken corrections and finished work on the passages which Erasmus brought up in his letter. These corrections were not available,

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<sup>1316</sup> There is abundant evidence of this. See, for example, Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 142, and especially note 20. See also the introductory notes to Allen 396: 'Another MS. of the Letters was borrowed for [Erasmus] from the monastery of Reichenau, in the Lake of Constance, in November 1515 (Basel MS. G. II. 30. 184) by Peter, a Carthusian, who first at Freiburg under Reisch, and subsequently as Prior of the house of Ittingen, in Canton Thurgau, took an active interest in the work (Basel MSS. G. II. 30. 131 and 129).'

<sup>1317</sup> See the introduction to letter 308 in the CWE, where the editors write about Reisch: 'He seems to have been involved in work of a preparatory kind on the great edition of the letters of Saint Jerome planned by Johannes Amerbach'.

<sup>1318</sup> Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 141-142.

<sup>1319</sup> See Beatus Rhenanus' letter to Charles V in Allen, volume 1, page 63, 247-255. For Rhenanus' further description of scholars working for the Jerome *Edition* see lines 256-278.

<sup>1320</sup> Allen 308, 42-43: Multa divinavimus, omnia non possumus.

<sup>1321</sup> Here I had to use my own translation since the CWE is noticeably different from the Latin text in Allen 308, 46-47: Sunt et alia; quid enim ibi non depravatum?

however, since he had written them into the printer's copy, then in the printers' hands.<sup>1322</sup> We shall see below that this was probably a copy of the 1508 Saccon edition of Jerome's letters.

Shortly after his arrival in Basel, Erasmus took over from Reisch leadership of the scholarly team that Johannes Amerbach had gathered together for the *Edition* since 1507, and which had been working for Amerbach's heir Johannes Froben since the former's death in December 1513.<sup>1323</sup> Despite his absence from Basel and Erasmus' engagements, Reisch continued to be at work actively on the *Edition* until its printing that took place from 1515 to 1516.<sup>1324</sup> It seems likely to me that Erasmus took other occasions to ask Reisch, whether through friends, by letter or in person, many of the questions which he did not pose in the above letter. From 1516 letters dating prior to the *Edition*'s appearance at that year's autumn Frankfurt book fair, we know that Erasmus sought and prized Reisch's opinion about the 1516 Froben *New Testament*.<sup>1325</sup> The same goes for Ludwig Ber, whom Erasmus also consulted about the *New Testament*, whose learning he praised most highly and whose good opinion about the *New Testament* he claimed to prize – and who also kindly transferred over to Erasmus one of his two prebends!<sup>1326</sup> Erasmus relied on work which these and other scholars at Basel had done for Jerome's *Letters* before his arrival at Basel. In his *argumentum* to Jerome's letter *Vere in vobis*, which Allen brings up in his notes,<sup>1327</sup> Erasmus remarked:

I found this letter corrected diligently enough by Johannes Cuno, a man most learned in Greek letters, and, as is equally vital for this kind of project, of great integrity and diligence. Moreover, I was satisfied with their efforts of that most learned man Johannes Reuchlin and last that of the Amerbach brothers, such that I did not think that there was any need for me to work on this letter.<sup>1328</sup>

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<sup>1322</sup> Allen 308, 21-24.

<sup>1323</sup> Dill I, 185.

<sup>1324</sup> Dill I, 188; AK 500, 4-7; AK 538, 8-11.

<sup>1325</sup> Allen 413, 8-10. Allen 456, 179-183.

<sup>1326</sup> Allen 413, 10-13.

<sup>1327</sup> See introductory notes to Allen 396.

<sup>1328</sup> See 1516 *Edition* IV, f. 34r/v: Argumentum epistolae sequentis. Collatione voluminum facta, docet quibus in locis aeditio Septuaginta dissonat ab Hebraica veritate: et interpretibus caeteris inter se ut saepe faciunt, discordantibus, indicat quid potissimum sit sequendum. Hoc opus quidem repperi satis diligenter emendatum opera Iohannis Cononis, viri litterarum Graecarum peritissimi, et quod ad huiusmodi negotium, non minus

Erasmus' statement is confirmed by the fact that most unusually for a letter of this size and complexity, chock-full of Hebrew and of Greek, he added no *scholia* whatsoever.<sup>1329</sup> In this case, Erasmus relied wholly on the prior work of other Froben editors.<sup>1330</sup> To me it seems possible, if not probable, that Erasmus took the same approach to other letters in the *Edition*'s first four volumes. For two other letters in the *Edition*'s fourth volume, for example, Erasmus provided neither *scholia* nor *argumenta*. The letter *Scio me Principia*, whose great length, complexity and many Hebrew and Greek passages would normally call for *scholia* in the *Edition*, does not even have an *argumentum* to introduce it, nor does the shorter letter to Marcella, *Magnis nos provocas quaestionibus*.<sup>1331</sup>

As the *Edition* approached completion, there were even more helpers in Johannes Froben's employ. Froben named one of these, Philipp Engelbrecht, when complaining about his services.<sup>1332</sup> In the same letter he cited contributions of other unnamed scholars (*doctores*) to the *Edition*, possibly collaborators at Reisch's Carthusian monastery in Freiburg.<sup>1333</sup> Noted scholars present at the press in order to work on the 1516 Froben *New Testament* also lent a hand as the 1516 Jerome *Edition*'s printing drew near. These included Nicholas Gerbel, another acquaintance of Aldus, and Johannes Oecolampadius, creator of a new index to the 1516 *Edition* that Froben published in 1520.<sup>1334</sup> Surviving sources bear little

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habebat momenti, summa fide parique diligentia. Praeterea clarissimi viri Ioannis Capnionis, postremo fratrum Amerbachiorum. Illorum studio contentus, non putavi meo labore opus esse. Respondet autem Germanis quibusdam, ostendens quo restitui debeant depravata in psalmis, iuxta Hebraicam veritatem, et Septuaginta aeditionem ab ipso Hieronymo sub asteriscis et obelis prius traditam.

<sup>1329</sup> See 1516 *Edition* IV, f. 41v.

<sup>1330</sup> See Allen 335, 268-275; Allen 396, 270-276.

<sup>1331</sup> See 1516 *Edition* IV, f. 46r (*Scio me Principia*); 1516 *Edition* IV, f. 61v (*Magnis nos provocas quaestionibus*).

<sup>1332</sup> For more information about Engelbrecht see *Contemporaries* 1, 432. See also Allen, 344; 357; 366. See note 3 to AK 531.

<sup>1333</sup> AK 535, 3-17. For information about the 'doctores' see note 6 to AK 535.

<sup>1334</sup> For information about Oecolampadius see *Contemporaries* 2, 26. See *Contemporaries* 2, 90-91 for more information about Gerbel. For Gerbel and his activities for the 1516 *New Testament* see Allen 351; Allen 352; Allen 358.

acknowledgement of the contributions these men made to the *Edition*'s composition.<sup>1335</sup> Along with Reuchlin and Beatus, in the *Edition*'s introductory letters, in his 1515 press campaign letters and in many other examples, Erasmus greatly praised Johannes Amerbach's three sons, Bruno, Boniface and Basil, to whom he ascribed most of the credit for correcting and for editing Jerome's *Commentaries* as well as for 'restoring' their Hebrew texts.<sup>1336</sup> The three brothers' father had sent them all to study at Selestat's Latin School and later at the University of Paris. According to Erasmus, Johannes Amerbach, 'a most excellent man, had taken care to have his three sons taught Greek, Hebrew and Latin'. In his press campaign letter to Leo X, Erasmus explained:

In fact the entire Amerbach family seems to have been designated by the Fates themselves expressly so that by their agency Jerome might rise from the dead...On his deathbed [Johannes Amerbach] commended this objective to his children as though part of their inheritance, and dedicated to it such resources as he had. Those excellent young men pursue with energy the splendid purpose entrusted to them by their worthy father, and have shared Jerome with me, on the understanding that everything outside the letters should be their responsibility.<sup>1337</sup>

Such praise notwithstanding, in the forewords to volumes six through nine attributed to Bruno Amerbach as well as in the foreword to volume five attributed both to Bruno and to Basil, the writers were quick to highlight Erasmus' foremost place in the effort to edit and to publish Jerome's complete works.<sup>1338</sup> The fifth volume's foreword suggested that Erasmus, had he only enough time, would have been capable of bringing the whole *Edition* to

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<sup>1335</sup> In fact, Erasmus criticized their work for the *New Testament*. See Allen 417; Allen 421.

<sup>1336</sup> See Allen 334, 127-137; Allen 335, 311-338. See also the 1516 *Edition*'s introductory letter (*epistula nuncupatoria*) to William Warham in Allen 396, 271-285.

<sup>1337</sup> Allen 335, 312-323: Porro plurimum attulerunt momenti fratres Amerbachii, quorum et impendiis et sudoribus cum Frobenio communicatis hoc negotii potissimum peragitur. Quae quidem domus in hunc usum ab ipsis fatis parata videtur, ut eius opera revivisceret Hieronymus [note that Aldus used the verb 'reviviscere' in a similar way in the introduction to his 1495-1496 edition of Theocritus' *Idylls*]. Pater, vir omnium optimus, tres filios in Graecis, Hebraeis ac Latinis curarat instituendos. Ipse decedens liberis suis studium hoc velut haereditarium commendavit, quicquid erat facultatum huic negotio dedicans. Atque optimi iuvenes pulcherrimam provinciam ab optimo parente mandatam gnaviter obeunt, sic mecum partiti Hieronymum, ut quod ab epistolaribus libris superest, id ad illorum pertineat curam.

<sup>1338</sup> See introductory notes to Allen 398.

completion by himself.<sup>1339</sup> Since Erasmus by his own admission did not know Hebrew, we should take such comments with a grain of salt.<sup>1340</sup>

The writers of these forewords also admitted their reliance on Erasmus' judgement in order to determine which tracts and commentaries had been wrongly attributed to Jerome. 'It was no secret to us', they wrote, 'that among these writings there were many that were wrongly ascribed to Jerome. And even though this was something that we could sniff out from the sentences themselves, nonetheless we did not dare to differ from others until Desiderius Erasmus, a man of surest judgement, singled them out with great assurance'.<sup>1341</sup> Thanks to Erasmus' help, so claimed this forward, the *Edition* had established Jerome's authentic work and separated it from the contamination of spurious writings: 'so that those with keen noses not be fooled by titles unless they wish to be fooled, our Erasmus analyzed and separated these with *censurae* [judgements] and with his table of contents.'<sup>1342</sup> In the longer introductory letter to the fifth volume of the 1516 *Edition*, found on the page after the above text, its writers stated again that Erasmus had done the greater part of the work for the 1516 *Edition* and outlined for readers the motives for which, and the means by which, all the Froben editors undertook the project to edit and to publish Jerome's works:

Johannes Amerbach, our father, long ago had set his mind on printing out with his presses all the works of the four doctors (as they call them) and had already carried this out with Ambrose and with Aurelius Augustine, and this not without happy issue. Jerome alone remained. Gregory Reisch undertook his correction through collating exemplars from countless libraries. He then called upon the most learned men from all parts of Germany; for he was most plainly of such a mind to restore those hallowed and ancient writers of the Christian religion that for this cause he would spare not effort, not money and not his already advanced age. And so among those that came, Johannes Reuchlin restored not a few things

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<sup>1339</sup> AK 551, 13-17.

<sup>1340</sup> ASD II-5, page 40, lines 484-488.

<sup>1341</sup> Title-page of 1516 *Edition* V: Ad lectorem Amorbachii. Non clam nobis fuit, in his esse permulta, quae falso inscriberentur Hieronymo. Id quod cum nobis et ante suboleret ex ipsa phrasi: tamen non audebamus nobis fidere, donec Desiderius Erasmus, homo certissimi iudicii, de his magna fiducia pronunciaret. Et tamen adeo nihil amputavimus eorum quae ante fuerunt excusa, ut multa etiam addiderimus, in hoc non nostro stomacho servientes, sed vulgi ingenio, et quorundam voluntati, quibus refragari cum id vehementer agerent, non libebat.

<sup>1342</sup> Title-page of 1516 *Edition* V: Qui naris sunt emunctae, non fallentur titulis, nisi falli cupiant, adeo singula digessit et discevit censuris et indice suo noster Erasmus.

in Hebrew, and Cuno of Nuremberg corrected many things in Greek and in Latin. But Erasmus of Rotterdam brought by far the greatest contribution to this edition, he who, had he but come to us in time, alone would have been up to seeing through the whole edition, a man who, aside from his wide and not at all vulgar learning and his tireless diligence truly wrought of iron, was of the soundest judgement and of marvellous skill in guessing, when this was necessary. He took on the first four volumes, to which he added *scholia* so that afterwards they cannot be easily corrupted. In some places we undertook the editing of Hebrew words, because without us he did not want to judge about these. Long ago our father saw to it that we be instructed to the point of considerable skill in Latin, in Greek and in Hebrew, because without their help nothing could be done in this effort, so great a work that even when dying at last he gave us this as our inheritance, hoping that if that old theology were to come back to life, the old spiny and cold kind of theologians and of sophists would have less sway and we would have more upright and nobler Christians...<sup>1343</sup>

This assessment may not have been realistic. Erasmus stated that he had worked only ‘as time allowed’ on volumes five through nine of the *Edition*, which were at any event mostly finished before his arrival at Basel. This was likely not very much when we keep in mind Erasmus’ many simultaneously running projects with Froben as well as his months of absence for a research trip back in England.<sup>1344</sup> In addition to bringing up their long toils on Jerome and making claims about their linguistic ability, the forewords ascribed to Bruno and Basil also pointed to the corruption of Jerome’s letters in existing exemplars, many of them contributions from libraries throughout Germany:

And indeed...we spent many years in this effort and no small part of our best years on Jerome, which could make old men out of any young man. First of all those with some skill in these matters can know how hard was the comparison of old and hardly readable volumes, of which we had a great number of copies furnished from almost all the libraries of Germany. Nor was everything to be decided from these exemplars that often conflicted with each other and which were most often corrupted: there was need

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<sup>1343</sup> Introductory letter to 1516 *Edition* V (critical text in AK 551, 1-26): Ioannes Amorbachius parens noster cum quattuor doctorum (ut vocant) omnia monumenta suis typis procudere destinasset, et iam Ambrosium et Aurelium Augustinum haud infeliciter absoluisset, Hieronymus restabat. Ad huius castigationem cum exemplaria, ductu humanissimi, doctissimique patris Gregorii Reischii Chartusii, ex innumeris bibliothecis comparavit: tum ex omni Germania viros undecumque doctissimos accivit, nam eo planissime erat animo erga restituendos sacros illos ac veteres Christianae religionis authores, ut huius rei studio, nec rei pecuniariae, nec aetate iam ingravescenti parceret. Inter hos itaque quos accersit, Ioannes Reuchlinus in hebraicis nonnulla reposuit. Conon Norimbergensis in graecis et latinis multa castigavit. Sed longe plurimum momenti attulit Erasmus ille Roterodamus, qui si nobis in tempore contigisset, vel unus ad omnia fuerat suffecturus, vir praeter eruditionem variam, minimeque vulgarem, diligentia infatigabili, prorsusque adamantina, iudicio exactissimo, et in divinando cum res postulat, mira quadam sollertia. Is quattuor primos Tomos in se recepit, in quos addidit et scholia, ne post hac facile depravari possent. Nos in Hebraicis alicubi commodavimus operam, quod in his sine nobis nollet iudicare. Porro pater cum in hoc nos ante velut instruxisset trium linguarum qualicunque peritia, Latinae, Graecae et hebraicae, quod sine horum praesidio, nihil agi poterat in hoc negotio, tam egregio operi tandem immoriens, hanc provinciam velut haereditariam nobis delegavit, futurum sperans, ut si vetus illa theologia revivisceret, minus valeret spinosum istud sophistarum et frigidum theologorum genus, et Christianos haberemus magis ingenuos et germanos...

<sup>1344</sup> Allen 335, 300-303.

for judgement in choosing and sometimes for divination, which indeed called for more carefulness than boldness.<sup>1345</sup>

Notwithstanding about seven years of work that Johannes Amerbach's editors and sons had undertaken for the *Edition* before Erasmus' arrival at Basel, the introductory letter to the *Edition*'s fifth volume still gave Erasmus pride of place as the *Edition*'s foremost editor.<sup>1346</sup> Erasmus and Beatus claimed that the Amerbach brothers relied on Erasmus for their editorial work,<sup>1347</sup> and it is, of course, hard to believe that Bruno would not have asked Erasmus for his advice about troublesome passages, as Beatus later recounted that he did.<sup>1348</sup>

Earlier in this chapter we saw Bruno asking Wolfgang Angst for his advice about problematic passages in Jerome's letters, and from this and from other sources we can understand that Bruno's engagement with the *Edition* was serious and extended beyond Jerome's commentaries to comprise the letters, at least before Erasmus' arrival in 1514.<sup>1349</sup> Until new and compelling evidence is uncovered and presented, however, it remains unlikely that we shall be able to say much more about what the Amerbach brothers truly did for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. Allen has remarked that the Amerbach brothers' 'ostensible labours as editors are open to doubt, and Bruno alone seems to have taken any actual part in the work'.<sup>1350</sup> At all events, we must read the forewords attributed to Bruno and to Basil with caution, since we know that Erasmus and especially Beatus played an important role in their

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<sup>1345</sup> Introductory letter to 1516 *Edition* V (AK 551, 28-41): Enimvero cum iuxta Isocratem non modo paternarum facultatum, sed et paternorum amicorum...atque adeo studiorum, successionem capessere deceat, nos omissis optimis simul ac suavissimis studiis annos, aliquot in hunc laborem insumpsimus, et nonnullam optimae aetatis portionem Hieronymo impendimus, iis quidem laboribus, qui cuivis adolescenti senium conciliare possent. Primum, quantum difficultatis habuerit veterum voluminum vix legibilium collatio, quorum nobis ingens copia fuit, omnibus fere Germaniae bibliothecis, exemplaria suggerentibus, ii nosse poterunt, qui in ea re aliquando sunt versati. Nec tota res ab exemplaribus pendebat, saepenumero inter se pugnantibus, saepissime corruptis, iudicio opus erat ad delectum, nonnunquam et divinatione, qua quidem in re magis religione opus fuit quam temeritate...

<sup>1346</sup> AK 551, 2-18.

<sup>1347</sup> ASD II-5, page 40, lines 484-488. Allen volume 1, page 63, lines 271-278.

<sup>1348</sup> Allen, volume 1, pages 63-64, 271-275.

<sup>1349</sup> See Dill I, 157-160 for a summary of many sources relating to the Amerbach brothers' work for the *Edition*.

<sup>1350</sup> See introductory notes to Allen 331.



composition. To write introductory letters that would be attributed to others was, it should be noted, common practice at the time. Erasmus had even proposed writing the foreword to the 1507 edition of his translations of Euripides in the great Aldus' stead!<sup>1351</sup> From his readings of manuscripts preserved at the Basel University library, Vanautgaerden has shown that this was also common practice at the Amerbach-Froben press. For example, many scholars at Basel, including Bruno Amerbach, wrote the draft of the introductory letter attributed to Froben in his 1513 edition of Erasmus' *Adages*, while Beatus took charge of correcting Bruno's draft and of putting on the finishing touches.<sup>1352</sup> Vanautgaerden has proven, moreover, that Erasmus, Beatus and others at Johannes Froben's press were responsible for writing Froben's many Latin forewords. He remarks:

From 1513 to 1527, the Basel printing-house put out many letters signed by Johannes Froben, while the printer of so many masterpieces of Latinity was incapable of even reading them... This did not prevent Johannes Froben from signing numerous letters written in an elegant style, flowering, notably, with Greek accusatives.<sup>1353</sup>

Vanautgaerden believes that the Amerbach brothers were 'perfectly able to write these letters',<sup>1354</sup> but Hirstein's still unpublished work with the manuscripts copies of the Amerbach brothers' forewords for the 1516 *Edition* has shown that the brothers' drafts of these forewords were left in a crude state and that Beatus extensively corrected them, so much as to blur the line between correction and composition.<sup>1355</sup> Allen also noticed these corrections, and Hirstein's scholarship has confirmed Allen's suspicions about the forewords to volumes five through nine of the *Edition* ascribed to the Amerbach brothers:

The prefaces to volumes five through nine are in the name of Bruno Amerbach, Basil's being added to his in volume five only. They are addressed to the reader and dated as follows: the eighth volume January, the seventh volume 7 March, the fifth volume 7 May, the sixth volume 1 June and the ninth volume 26 June. But the ascription to the Amerbachs is perhaps misleading in all cases; for autograph originals of three of them exist at Basle, two, for the ninth volume and the supplement to the eighth

<sup>1351</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 92-99; 326-327.

<sup>1352</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 319-329.

<sup>1353</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 325.

<sup>1354</sup> Vanautgaerden, *Typographie*, 327. For the whole discussion of this matter, see pages 325-329; 337-361.

<sup>1355</sup> I am citing the still unpublished *Epistulae Beati Rhenani*, ed. James Hirstein. See letters 50; 74; 76; 79.

volume, written by Beatus Rhenanus...and the third, a draft which was partially used for the sixth volume, in the handwriting of Erasmus.<sup>1356</sup>

While we must take seriously the repeated claims that Erasmus and other remarkable scholars such as Reuchlin made about the Amerbach brothers' learning,<sup>1357</sup> it nonetheless seems likely to me that such claims were exaggerated. We see good reason for caution in a letter that Mathias Adrianus, the Amerbach brothers' Hebrew teacher, wrote to Johannes Amerbach in January 1513.<sup>1358</sup> Adrianus was a Spanish Jew converted to Christianity,<sup>1359</sup> whose abilities as an Hebraist both Reuchlin and Cuno hailed with glowing words in separate letters to Johannes Amerbach.<sup>1360</sup> Reuchlin claimed 'never to have met anyone in Germany more learned in Hebrew' and asked Amerbach kindly to heed Adrianus' corrections and suggestions about the Hebrew for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1361</sup> Notwithstanding the kind and enthusiastic letters of introduction that Reuchlin and Cuno wrote for him, in his own letter sent bundled together with them,<sup>1362</sup> Adrianus warned Amerbach about texts of Jerome's works that 'German scholars', in this case almost surely Reuchlin and Pellikan, had supposedly corrected. Adrianus asked Amerbach to let him see the texts 'lest you fall into trouble...for I know for certain that neither Reuchlin nor Pellikan have the ability to correct Saint Jerome'. Reuchlin and Pellikan were far more renowned than the Amerbach brothers for their abilities in Hebrew, so Adrianus also implicitly called into question the Amerbachs' ability in Hebrew since he repeats to their father in the same letter: 'I know of no one in all

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<sup>1356</sup> See introductory notes to Allen 396.

<sup>1357</sup> In a letter in which Reuchlin described to Johannes Amerbach his search for manuscripts at the Cistercian Monastery at Bebenhausen, he expressed his desire for Bruno's help with his editing of Greek and of Hebrew passages for the 1516 *Edition*. See RBW 174, 26-28.

<sup>1358</sup> See AK 654, 5-11 (Bruno to Bonifacius, Basel, April 1519), in which Bruno called Adrianus 'once our teacher in Hebrew letters' (quondam in litteris hebraicis preceptorem nostrum).

<sup>1359</sup> For more on Adrianus see Dill I, 162; Contemporaries 1, 9-10.

<sup>1360</sup> See AK 476.

<sup>1361</sup> RBW 213, 3-11 (to Johannes Amerbach): Quia es omnium literarum amator accerimus, non potui praesentium ostensori, domino Matthaeo Adriano Hispano, medicinae doctori, Basileam eunti ad te literarum dare. Quare, qui soles variarum literarum praeceptores honorare, oro, non etiam hunc praetermittas, quo in lingua Hebraica nunquam in Alemannia doctiorem expertus sum. Audies virum, et placebit, sive Hebraice scribendum sit sive quoque Chaldaice. Commenda eum doctis et Hebraeae linguae faventibus, et rem mihi gratam feceris.

<sup>1362</sup> See introductory notes to AK 475.

Germany capable of correcting Saint Jerome'.<sup>1363</sup> Erasmus later admired Adrianus' abilities and may have helped to get him appointed the first professor of Hebrew at Louvain's Trilingual College founded in 1517, of whose first organization Erasmus took charge.<sup>1364</sup> If Adrianus was indeed the Amerbach brothers' Hebrew teacher at some point, he would have been in a fair position to assess their abilities, even if his letters preserved in the Amerbachs' correspondence show that his own Latin was poor and that he himself could never have done the job of correcting the Hebrew for the 1516 *Edition* without considerable help.

Adrianus' letter to Johannes Amerbach is nonetheless a telling reminder that we must read with caution contemporary humanists' appraisals of their colleagues' linguistic abilities, especially in letters meant for the broader public. In his 1515 press campaign letters for the *Edition*, for example, Erasmus called Reuchlin 'a man with an exceptional knowledge of the languages',<sup>1365</sup> and 'almost equally at home in the three tongues, Greek, Latin and Hebrew'.<sup>1366</sup> We see something quite different in a less public letter to John Fisher dated 5 June 1516 but first published in Froben's 1519 collection of Erasmus' letters called the *Farrago* (*Assorted Letters*). In this letter, Erasmus entertained doubts about Reuchlin's abilities and clearly put his grasp of Hebrew below his abilities with Greek, since he called Wolfgang Capito 'a much better Hebrew scholar than Reuchlin'. He noted, however, that

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<sup>1363</sup> AK 477, 13-18: Et ne facias labores gratas, et ne error novissimus fit peior, prius publicando tantum egregium opus putando te eum per Alemanos [eum] esse correctum, amoneo te, ut prius mihi ostendas aliquem quantum vel totum opus, ne incuras in damno etc., quia ego scio pro certo, quod Rochelino vel Pellicano non habent potestatem corrigendi d. s. Hieronymum. See AK 477, 36-40: Mitto tibi epistola Rochelini cum epistola v. p. Pellicano, amico tuo et ambo auditores mei. Iam non restat nisi te adhuc amonere, quod (casu quod neccese est) mitte pro me; ego promisi amici tui paratus esse, quia, ut dixi, scio nullus in tota Alemani posset corrigere d. et sa. Hieronymum. Propterea vide, donec tempus habet.

<sup>1364</sup> *Contemporaries* 1, 9. See Allen 686; Allen 687; Allen 689; Allen 690; Allen 691; Allen 699.

<sup>1365</sup> Allen 333, 111-113: Vir est enim complurimum linguarum egregie peritus...

<sup>1366</sup> Allen 335, 303-306: Inter quos est eximius ille vir, Ioannes Reuchlinus Phorcensis, trium linguarum Graecae, Latinae et Hebraicae pene ex aequo peritus; ad haec in nullo doctrinae genere non ita versatus ut cum primis certare possit.

‘both of them are diligent students of Greek’.<sup>1367</sup> Although Erasmus was himself unable aptly to judge the Hebrew learning of Reuchlin or of Capito, from this evidence we can conclude that Erasmus was not beyond public-spirited exaggeration for the benefit of the republic of letters. In his introductory letter to the *Edition*, Erasmus claimed that the three Amerbach brothers had been ‘equipped with the three tongues as though they were born expressly for the revival of ancient texts’ and had even ‘outstripped their father’s wishes and expectations’.<sup>1368</sup> The foreword to the *Edition*’s fifth volume ascribed to Bruno seconded these claims.<sup>1369</sup> Erasmus may have relied on Bruno at times for help with Hebrew in Jerome’s letters, but if Beatus’ corrections to the Latin forewords attributed to Bruno and to Basil Amerbach are truly representation of the brothers’ abilities in Latin, starting from the reasonable assumption that their knowledge of Hebrew and of Greek would have been less developed, we must have serious doubts about how much they were able to contribute to the restoration of Greek and Hebrew texts in the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. As for Reuchlin, in a letter from April 1511, at which time he had all but finished his work on Jerome’s commentaries, we see that he had employed a Jewish messenger while he was working on the *Edition* and recommended his instruction to other German scholars such as Nicholas Ellenbog. It is not out of question that Reuchlin employed other Jewish scholars and sought their advice as he worked for the *Edition*.<sup>1370</sup>

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<sup>1367</sup> Allen 413, 14-16: Idem sentit Vuolphangus Capito concionator publicus Basiliensis, vir Hebraice longe doctior Reuchlino, ad haec in theologica palaestra exercitatissimus; uterque Graecis literis sedulo dat operam.

<sup>1368</sup> See Allen 396, 270-280. The text for the quote see Allen 396, 276-279: Atque hi sane paternum animum et expectationem vicerunt etiam, nihil antiquius ducentes Hieronymi gloria, et hac gratia nec impendio parcentes nec valetudini.

<sup>1369</sup> AK 551, 20-27.

<sup>1370</sup> RBW 175, 1-9. For more on ‘Christian Hebraism’ and for collaboration between Christians and Jews in contemporary Strasbourg, see Debra Kaplan, *Beyond Expulsion: Jews, Christians and Reformation Strasbourg* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011).

In his 1540 letter addressed to Charles V, Beatus praised the Amerbach brothers' 'unbelievable and careful diligence in correcting' Jerome's commentaries on the Bible, but like the Amerbach brothers he also emphasized Erasmus' foremost role in making the *Edition* and especially in correcting Jerome's letters.<sup>1371</sup> According to Beatus, the Amerbach brothers often turned to Erasmus for help and 'he was always at hand whenever they had a question or there was any need of judgement because of the variety of exemplars'.<sup>1372</sup> Erasmus, moreover, 'took care especially of the volumes of Jerome's letters, partly by finishing the *scholia* that he had long since begun and partly by adding new *scholia* and writing up *argumenta* for the letters'. 'This work', Beatus understated, 'was not small', and the greater work still of the 1516 Froben *New Testament* besieged Erasmus and the Froben editors at the same time.<sup>1373</sup> These words written decades after the fact, in which he notes that Erasmus had undertaken quite a bit of work on Jerome's *scholia* while at Basel and had not yet written up the new *argumenta* for the letters, reflected hindsight that Beatus did not have when he wrote to Michael Hummelberg in 1514 upon Erasmus' arrival at Basel:

Erasmus of Rotterdam, a man of the highest learning, most recently came to Basel buried under good books, among which are these: all the works of Saint Jerome corrected, all the works of Seneca corrected, most numerous annotations in the New Testament, a book of *Parallels* [an abridged collection of useful sayings from noteworthy men of the past] many translations from Plutarch, his *Adages* enlarged in many places and, what is more, certain rough things already begun but not finished. Froben is publishing the New Testament in Greek with his commentaries and likewise his corrected and enlarged *Adagia*. The works of Plutarch, most elegantly printed, will shortly come off the presses. Schürer will print the book of *Parallels* and the book *De Copia*, which Erasmus gave to him already corrected when he was treated most kindly by Schürer in Strasbourg. I have written Schürer about the works of Seneca. Because if Erasmus does not find someone in Germany that will print it, he will go off to Italy along with the works of Saint Jerome. Indeed he plans to go to Rome before the first of October should no wars forbid this...<sup>1374</sup>

<sup>1371</sup> Allen, volume 1, page 63, lines 268-274: Et iam defuncto patre, Bruno et Basilius filii una cum Ioanne Frobenio Hieronymi informationem aggressi erant, et in prophetis aliquo usque progressi. Erasmo novo hospiti statim in aedes Frobenianas recepto placuit aeditionis nitor, sed inprimis incredibilis fratrum Amerbachiorum in castigando sedulaque diligentia.

<sup>1372</sup> Allen, volume 1, pages 63-64, lines 274-276: Ipse ergo siquando consulebatur, ubi iudicio opus erat propter exemplarium variationem, nusquam deerat.

<sup>1373</sup> Allen, volume 1, page 64, 275-280: Verum Epistolarum volumina sibi peculiariter vendicabat, partim absolvendis scholiis, quae iam pridem coeperat, partim novis addendis et argumentis adscribendis occupatus. Hic labor non erat exiguus. Accessit longe maior. Desiderabant studiosi Galliarum et Germaniarum seorsim aedi Novum Testamentum Graece, quod cum Veteri Venetiis coniunxerant.

<sup>1374</sup> See BWBR 40: Erasmus Roterodamus, summae eruditionis vir, nuperrime Basileam venit onustus bonis libris, in quibus sunt haec: omnia opera divi Hieronymi emendata, omnia opera Senecae emendata,

Beatus' first enthusiastic observations about what Erasmus brought with him to Basel call to our attention the link between the Seneca and the Jerome editions, one that Erasmus also emphasized in his introduction to the 1515 Seneca edition addressed to the Bishop of Durham, Thomas Ruthall.<sup>1375</sup> In a lengthy comparison of actual military battles between English forces and the French and the Scots and his own editorial efforts, Erasmus wrote: 'I have taken two authors, the best of all but the least well preserved, Saint Jerome and Seneca, and with great efforts have rescued them from the corruptions, those most savage enemies of good literature, by which they had been hitherto not so much defiled as completely destroyed.'<sup>1376</sup> Erasmus then described his 'battles' with the corruption of Seneca and of Jerome in language that is surprising given his undoubted commitment to non-violence and the fact that his good friend and pupil Alexander Stewart had died in this very battle in question between the English and the Scots at Flodden Field.<sup>1377</sup> In this letter Erasmus set the difficulty of his editorial battles above those of the English military campaigns against the allied French and Scots:

Like you I had two enemies to fight, and I doubt whether at any point in your campaign you had more difficulty and more toil to face than I had in this business of mine. But there is one point in which my record is even better than yours: all by myself I was both general and private soldier, and engaged those thousands of enemies single-handed. Nor was the carnage in my conflict any less than on your fields of battle...the Scots did indeed provide you with a glorious victory, their king himself and countless nobles falling on the field....but that victory cost you many lives. I, however, in a single engagement slew, cut in pieces and destroyed over four thousand foemen (monsters, rather); for such, I suppose, was the total

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annotationes in Novum Testamentum copiosissimae, Liber similium, Plutarchi multa versa, Adagia nullo non loco aucta, multa praeterea rudia etiamnum incepta quidem, sed nondum absoluta. Novum Testamentum Graece hic imprimet Frobenius cum annotationibus illius, item Adagia castigata et auctissima. Plutarchi opuscula aliquot hiis diebus officinam aggredientur eleganter excussa. Librum similium Schurerius imprimet cum libro de Copia, quem Erasmus illi emendatum dedit, cum Argentorati humanissime ab eo tractaretur. De operibus Senecae Schurerio scripsi. Quod si in Germania non invenerit, qui imprimat, secum in Italiam deferet cum operibus divi Hieronymi. Omnino enim paulo ante Kalendas Octobres Romam proficisci statuit, nisi bella vetent...

<sup>1375</sup> See CWE 23 for information about the *Parallels* and CWE 24 for information about *De Copia*.

<sup>1376</sup> Allen 325, 6-10: ...ego duos omnium optimos sed omnium depravatissimos autores, divum Hieronymum et Seneca, a mendis, teterrimis videlicet litterarum hostibus, quibus hactenus non contaminati fuerant sed prorsus extincti, summo studio vindicavi.

<sup>1377</sup> See ASD II-3, pages 402-404 (adage 1401) for Erasmus' moving obituary of Alexander in the adage, *Spartam nactus es, hanc orna*.

number of corruptions I removed from Seneca alone. One may add that the Scottish troops had scarcely crossed the English frontier, and had seized only one fortress, out of which they were soon driven. But the whole of Jerome and the whole of Seneca had been occupied for many centuries by an infinite army of corruptions, so that nothing was left anywhere that was not held by the enemy.<sup>1378</sup>

Erasmus then compared his work on Jerome and on Seneca:

I thought these two authors both deserved a tribute of the kind. Jerome is the one author in sacred literature whom we can match even against the Greeks...And Seneca was so highly valued by Saint Jerome that alone among the Gentiles he was recorded in the *De viris illustribus*...because he thought him the one writer who, while not a Christian, deserved to be read by Christians.<sup>1379</sup>

Erasmus' explicit and detailed comparison of his simultaneous 'warfare' to correct Jerome and Seneca before his travels to Basel in 1514 is bolstered by many comments in his letters dating from before 1514 and well afterwards,<sup>1380</sup> such as when he described the time he and Robert Aldridge read and corrected Seneca and Jerome together at Queen's College.<sup>1381</sup>

Writing to Jakob Wimpfeling shortly after his arriving at Basel in 1514, Erasmus even expressed a desire to write *scholia* for Seneca should he find the time for this.<sup>1382</sup> In his 1523 letter to John of Botzheim, Erasmus noted that while he had begun work on the Seneca edition when back at Aldus' press in Venice and had left a printer's copy with Aldus for the printer to do with as he pleased, he nonetheless continued his work on Seneca whilst at Cambridge:

...I made a fresh recension of Seneca's tragedies afterwards in England and sent them to Bade, who thought fit to mix my material with other people's. Then in Cambridge I came on several ancient codices, and set about Seneca the rhetorician, with great efforts on my part, but the edition proved somewhat unfortunate. For being called back to business in my own country, I had entrusted to scholarly friends the task of choosing out of my marginal annotations what they thought worth using, and they – generously, to be sure – undertook it...and it was useless to regret that I had not followed the advice of the crested lark in the fable: Do not wait for your friends to do what you can do yourself. What was more, that part of the copy which had the most notes went astray...For some books I had no codices of any antiquity to assist me, in the *Natural Questions* for instance and the *Controversies*, and in these, in a few passages, I had added my conjecture without changing the text. In other works where

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<sup>1378</sup> Allen 325, 10-14; 19-29.

<sup>1379</sup> Allen 325, 64-75.

<sup>1380</sup> Allen 281, 3-5.

<sup>1381</sup> Allen 1766, 42-44.

<sup>1382</sup> Allen 305, 224-228.

I was able to call on old copies for assistance, I had filled the whole margins with notes; but these notes needed a critical eye. Had I been at hand to help when this book was printed, the unprejudiced reader would agree that any labour I devoted to the text was not ill spent...<sup>1383</sup>

In his introductory letter to the 1529 Seneca edition published by Jerome Froben, Erasmus again described his work for the 1515 Seneca edition in detail to the Archbishop of Cracow, Peter Tomiczki, to whom the new edition was dedicated:

Since I have followed this practice consistently up to the present day, the reader will be all the more astonished to see that, contrary to precedent, the work that was formerly dedicated to Thomas, bishop of Durham, now bears another man's name. I assure you, my lord bishop, that this did not happen by chance or through an oversight, but was a deliberate choice; for by this device I wish to make clear to everyone that the previous edition was not my work, although, relying unwisely on the assurances of a friend, I did contribute a preface to it. At Cambridge, having obtained several manuscripts (*libros manu descriptos*) of Seneca, I enlisted the services of a collaborator. I then made a cursory, rather than a thorough, reading of the whole text, and noted variant readings in the margins as well as conjectures of my own. Among these were many that needed the attention of a vigilant and learned scholar. Since it was not convenient for me to stay longer in Basel, I entrusted the whole project to a friend whose good faith I had no reason to doubt at the time, nor do I want to complain of it now. But several months later, on my return to Basel, I found he had carried out the work in a manner that made me blush at its publication.<sup>1384</sup>

Erasmus clearly thought far worse of the 1515 Seneca edition than he ever did about the 1516 *Edition*, so we should naturally suspect that the nature and the scope of his involvement with these two editions were different. From his analysis of Erasmus' descriptions of his own work on Jerome and on Seneca, however, Dill concludes that we can with good reason assume that at very least Erasmus' methods for working on these two editions were similar:

When he had no old manuscripts at his disposition, he simply wrote conjectures in the margins [of a prior printed edition]. When he had access to manuscripts, he changed the text [in the printed edition] and noted his reasoning and variants in the margins. Such marginal notes were no easier to decipher in

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<sup>1383</sup> See Allen, volume 1, page 13, 8-32.

<sup>1384</sup> Allen 2091, 21-38: *Adversus huiusmodi exempla cum in hunc usque diem perpetuo meum morem obtinuerim, hoc vehementius admirabitur aliquis, quod opus pridem dicatum Thomae episcopo Dunelmensi, nunc videat alterius praeferre nomen. Hoc, amplissime Praesul, nec casu nec temere, sed consulto factum esse fateor. Siquidem vel hac ratione cunctis testatum esse volui, priorem aeditionem non fuisse meam; quanquam plus satis fretus amici cuiusdam promissis addideram praefationem. Cantabrigae cum nactus essem aliquot Senecae libros manu descriptos, adhibito laboris socio totum Senecam percurri verius quam perlegi; annotatis in spatio marginis quae vel diversa compereram in exemplaribus, vel ipse ex me addivinaram. In his erant permulta quae vigilantis et eruditi cuiuspiam discussionem requirebant. Cum mihi diutius Basileae commorari non esset commodum, totum hoc negotium amico cuidam, de cuius fide nec tum quicquam addubitabam, nec nunc conqueri libet, commisi. At post menses aliquot Basileam reversus, comperi sic tractatum opus ut me vehementer puderet eius aeditionis.*



the Jerome *Edition* than they were in the Seneca edition, written in small letters, in shorthand and abbreviated.<sup>1385</sup>

Erasmus' handwriting was notoriously hard to read.<sup>1386</sup> For the *scholia* for the Jerome *Edition*, Froben paid men with clearer script, including Conrad Brunner (or Fonteius), to re-copy Erasmus' handwritten *scholia* for the typesetters.<sup>1387</sup> This was a common practice at the time. Allen notes, however, that copyists did not always reproduce Erasmus' handwritten *scholia* 'with minute fidelity', and this was only one source of possible error in the process of getting Erasmus' *scholia* from the humanist's pen to the printed page.<sup>1388</sup>

It was hard enough to get things right when Erasmus was present at the Froben press and therefore able, at least in theory, to oversee printing and to guide colleagues and proof-readers through his marginal notes – and to give oral instructions of which, however, little trace remains.<sup>1389</sup> Far harder was it to print an accurate text with Erasmus' materials when he was not there, which was often the case.<sup>1390</sup> In April 1515 Erasmus was on his way to England, and he seems to have brought a large share, if not all, of his commentaries on Jerome with him, doubtless with the intent to continue work on them with resources in England.<sup>1391</sup> But back at Basel he had left scholars, printers, proof-readers and other correctors in charge of printing both the Seneca and the Jerome editions.<sup>1392</sup> Beatus and his assistant William Nesen found themselves soundly in the lurch, charged as they were with preparing the Seneca edition for printing out of the problematic materials that Erasmus left them. Both scholars wrote to Erasmus at least three times in order to explain difficulties with

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<sup>1385</sup> Dill I, 173.

<sup>1386</sup> See, for example, Allen 349, 1-2: Accepi litteras tuas elegantissimas, quibus de quibusdam locis qui subobscuri videbantur, certiores me reddidisti.

<sup>1387</sup> Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 137-138. See AK 544 for one of Brunner's letters to Boniface Amerbach.

<sup>1388</sup> See Allen's introductory notes to letter 326 in Allen, volume II, page 55.

<sup>1389</sup> Husner, 'Die Handschriften', 135.

<sup>1390</sup> See Allen 2091, 33-46. See John Papys, 'Erasmus' and Lipsius' Editions of Seneca', 15, note 19.

<sup>1391</sup> See Allen 332, 7-14.

<sup>1392</sup> See Allen 2581, 6-12; Allen 2682, 27-35.

the editing process. In a letter dated 17 April 1515, Beatus wrote to Erasmus that although the printing of Seneca was well under way and that William Nesen was ‘most careful in reading proof’, he still needed Erasmus’ help. ‘The text is still disfigured by many mistakes (as you well know),’ he wrote, and ‘you are the one person whose help it would still need’.<sup>1393</sup> In a dramatic moment reflecting the chaos that often reigned at the Froben press,<sup>1394</sup> Beatus recounted to Erasmus how he truly did stop the presses and, ‘on the spur of the moment, when that sheet had already begun to be printed, I emended it like this; whether I was as clever as I was brave, I do not know.’<sup>1395</sup> Beatus was clearly uncomfortable with this situation. He noted, however, that although he would gladly undertake the task ‘to emend this text in the places that are still left uncorrected’ with the help of an ‘ancient copy’, there was little more that he could do without Erasmus’ presence at Basel. He also expressed his fears about possible negative consequences that the 1515 Seneca edition could have for Erasmus’ scholarly reputation.<sup>1396</sup> On this same 17 April Nesen wrote to Erasmus asking for explanations about his marginal notes: ‘I find in the margin that some things have been marked in your hand as though they were spurious and inserted, with the words “added by some foolish fellow”’. Please let me know...whether these are to be cut out, or printed with the rest.’<sup>1397</sup> In a letter dated 30 April 1515, Beatus explained to Erasmus that he was not able to make much progress with the materials at hand:

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<sup>1393</sup> Allen 328, 1-6: Seneca belle procedit, eloquentissime vir; duobus enim praelis imprimitur. Nesenus est admodum in recognoscendo diligens, atque utinam in restituendo tam essem ego felix quam hic in olfaciendis erratis non est naris obesa. Ceterum cum exemplar sit adhuc multis mendis depravatum (quod ipse nosti), tuam unius operam adhuc posceret.

<sup>1394</sup> See D’Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 8-12; 30-38.

<sup>1395</sup> Allen 328, 17-18: Haec extempore, cum ea charta iam imprimi coepisset, in hunc modum, nescio si tam docte quam audaciter, restitui...

<sup>1396</sup> Allen 328, 29-35: Sed nolim meo semper iudicio fidere, praesertim extemporario quodque ab impatientibus morae hominibus exigatur. Verum si nobis exemplar aliquod vetustum adesset, nihil agerem lubentius quam ut hunc autorem in his quae supersunt incastigata restituerem: hoc enim agendo cum studiosis prodessem, tum honori consulerem tuo, quanquam tu non omnes mendas sed plurimas te dispunxisse praefatus es.

<sup>1397</sup> Allen 329, 1-6: In operibus Senecae quae tuo labore maximo politiorum litterarum candidatis restituisti, offendimus in margine quaedam tua manu veluti adultera et supposititia notata, his quidem verbis: ‘Haec a

Seneca is being printed on two presses: I could wish the copy were cleaner and the reader a little more careful: but he does not detect all the mistakes, nor am I the man, if he sometimes does detect them, to set them all to rights, both because my knowledge is so very limited and because to be over-clever in someone else's book has something foolish about it.<sup>1398</sup>

About this time Bruno Amerbach begged Erasmus to return from England as soon as possible in order to help finish work with the 1516 Jerome *Edition*'s still unprinted volumes. We might suppose that this was at least in part on account of the difficulty of working with Erasmus' marginal notes and corrections for Jerome's letters. In a letter dated the day after the two letters cited above, Bruno asked Erasmus to come back to Basel: 'I can think of nothing to say, except to advise you, if it is in order for me to advise you, to come back to us soon. Believe me, your arrival will be looked forward to, not only by your friends (by us, that is), but by absolutely everybody.'<sup>1399</sup> In short time Bruno wrote to Erasmus in plainer words:<sup>1400</sup>

Rustic am I, and call a spade a spade, so you must take my very foolish letter in good part. The volume of spurious works [1516 *Edition* II] is going on even better than it deserves, though the copies (*antigrapha*) are so full of mistakes that it would be less trouble to clean out an Augean cowbyre. We shall finish, so far as I can guess, about the first of August. Unless you are content for Jerome to run dreadful risks, you will do well to come back to us soon. As for me, if I have made any mistake from my native ignorance, I will do my best to correct it...[written] in haste, from our treadmill at Basel.<sup>1401</sup>

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quodam nebulone addita'; rescribe, quamvis ego indoctior quam ut a doctissimo litteras expectare debeam, an sint haec expungenda vel cum ceteris imprimenda.

<sup>1398</sup> Allen 330, 5-9: Seneca duobus praelis excuditur. Vellem exemplar esse castigatius et recognitiorem paulo diligentior. Sed nec is singula deprehendit errata, nec, si nonnunquam deprehendat, is ego sum qui cuncta restituere possit, tum quod eruditio contigit perquam exigua, tum quod in alieno libro nimis ingeniosum esse stultitia non vacat.

<sup>1399</sup> Here I had to change the CWE's translation of *monere*. They have translated *monere* as 'to ask', but I believe that a better translation here is to translate *monere* as 'to warn' or 'to advise'. I chose 'to advise' in this case in order to soften the translation. Allen 331, 1-4: Salve, doctissime Erasme. Nihil aliud quod ad te scribam occurrit quam ut moneam, modo te monere liceat, ut quamprimum ad nos redeas. Venies, crede mihi, expectatus non modo tuis, hoc est nobis, sed prorsus omnibus. Vale.

<sup>1400</sup> The date of this letter is contested, but Hartmann's arguments for dating this letter about May 1515 are convincing. See the introductory notes to AK 524. See the introductory notes to Allen 420.

<sup>1401</sup> AK 524, 1-10: Salve, eruditissime Erasme. Ἀγροϊκός εἰμι τὴν σκάφην σκάφην λέγων. Quare ineptissimas meas literas aequi bonique consule. Tomus ψευδεπιγράφων etiam felicius quam mereatur procedit, quanquam antigrapha tot scateant mendis, ut Augee bubile minore negotio quam haec repurgaveris. Huic, quantum coniectura colligere possum, ad Kalendas Augusti extremam manum imponemus. Tu nisi Hieronymum periclitari velis, propediem ad nos redibis. Nos si quippiam Germana rusticitate peccavimus, pro virili emendabimus. Raptim ex pistrino Frobeniano apud Basileam.

It seems that Erasmus had taken along with him to England ‘all his commentaries’ for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, and he was quite worried that he might have lost them during the journey across the Channel. He wrote to Peter Gills on 7 May 1515:

The crossing [from Tournai to England] was expensive and dangerous but rapid. My box which I had entrusted to Franz’ brother has not arrived yet, which is the most unfortunate thing that could happen to me. All my commentaries (*commentaria*) for Jerome are in it, and unless I recover them soon, the men who are printing it in Basel will run out of work, not without great loss.<sup>1402</sup>

We cannot know for sure what exactly these ‘commentaries’ were, but it stands to reason that they comprised a large part of Erasmus’ work for volumes one, three and four of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. Already at Basel volume two and volumes five through nine, which did not include any *scholia*, were being printed in Erasmus’ absence and, according to his testimony in the above letter, were almost complete since the printers might soon ‘run out of work’. Froben printed simultaneously parts of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, the 1515 Seneca edition and the 1516 New Testament.<sup>1403</sup> By late July 1515 Erasmus was back at Basel and he could have been on hand to oversee some of the finishing touches for the Seneca edition,<sup>1404</sup> whose completion Bruno had foreseen for the beginning of August 1515 at the latest.<sup>1405</sup> It would therefore be ready for that year’s autumn Frankfurt book fair.<sup>1406</sup>

The claims that we find on the title-page of the Seneca edition are different from those that we found on the title-page of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*’s first volume, where we read that owing to Erasmus’ care, ‘what was most corrupted before has been most thoroughly

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<sup>1402</sup> Allen 332, 5-9: Traiectio sumptuosa fuit et periculosa, sed tamen velox. Vas meum quod fratri Francisci commiseram, nondum advectum est; qua re mihi nihil potuit contingere infelicius. In eo sunt omnia in Hieronymum commentaria; quae nisi mature recepero, cessabunt Basileae qui excudunt, non sine magno suo malo. Here I had to alter slightly the CWE translation of the text in order to be more precise about the word *commentaria*, which is important in this context.

<sup>1403</sup> Dill I, 191; 196-198.

<sup>1404</sup> See introductory notes to Allen 337.

<sup>1405</sup> See note 146 above.

<sup>1406</sup> See AK 535, 19-20.

corrected, and what before was mutilated has been restored'.<sup>1407</sup> Instead, and with more modesty, the Seneca edition's introductory letter attributed to Froben advertised that 'if not purged of all errors, then surely' this edition was purged 'of many'.<sup>1408</sup> In his introductory letter to the Seneca edition, dated 7 March 1515, Erasmus stated that he had edited Seneca as best he could and that although he had not 'failed to notice that many errors still remain', these were 'of a kind that without the aid of ancient exemplars (*veterum auxilio codicum*) could hardly be removed by Seneca himself'.<sup>1409</sup> In later years, as Jan Papy has remarked, Erasmus distanced himself from this edition, of whose final version he claimed to have been very ashamed upon returning to Basel in summer 1515.<sup>1410</sup> Erasmus therefore sought to right mistakes with a new 1529 Seneca edition most diligently improved. He advertised in the introductory letter to the latter edition:

Anyone who takes the time [to compare the two editions] will immediately agree that here we have a different Seneca, not because there are no problems remaining to be solved, but because numerous monstrosities have been removed from the text by bold and happy criticism. In this I had the assistance of several copies, some of considerable antiquity (*mirae vetustatis*).<sup>1411</sup>

Erasmus claimed, moreover, that with this new Seneca edition he wished to open the door to later scholars' improvements on his work:

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<sup>1407</sup> See title-page to 1516 *Edition I: Omnium Operum Divi Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis Tomus Primus* παρανετκα videlicet ea quae ad vitam recte instituendam pertinent complectens una cum argumentis et scholiis Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami cuius opera potissimum emendata sunt quae ante hac erant depravatissima et instaurata ea quae prius erant mutila.

<sup>1408</sup> Title-page to 1515 Seneca: Ioannes Frobenius Vrae Philosophiae Studiosis S. D. En tibi lector optime, Lucii Annaei Senecae sanctissimi philosophi lucubrationes omnes, additis etiam nonnullis, Erasmi Roterodami cura, si non ab omnibus, certe ab innumeris mendis repurgatae. In his evolvendis si diligenter versaberis, et linguam tuam reddent expolitiorem, et vitam emendatiorem. Bene vale, et nostram industriam, tuo favore vicissim adiuva. In inclyta Germaniae Basilea. Anno MDXV mense Iulio.

<sup>1409</sup> Allen 325, 101-103: Neque vero me fugit plurimum adhuc restitisse mendarum; sed quae sine veterum auxilio codicum submoveri vix ab ipso possent Seneca.

<sup>1410</sup> See Allen 2091, 33-38.

<sup>1411</sup> Allen 2091, 96-99: Scio neminem crediturum, nisi priorem aeditionem cum hac contulerit. Id is quis non gravabitur facere, continue fatebitur alium prodisse Senecam: non quod nihil resederit excutiendum, sed quod innumera portenta non minus feliciter quam fortiter sustulerimus, idque praesidio diversorum codicum, inter quos erant aliquot mirae vetustatis. For more details on Erasmus' shock at the final result of the 1515 Seneca edition and his efforts to right these wrongs with the 1529 Seneca, see Papy's, 'Editions of Seneca', 13-17. Papy's footnotes for these pages are especially informative.

I believe that I have advanced matters so far that if a scholar with more ability, learning and leisure improves upon this edition as much as I have improved upon the earlier one, we shall have a Seneca who can be read with the minimum of anguish and the maximum of profit. I have added short notes, few in number, and only where I thought it necessary to remove serious corruption; for there would have been no limit to the annotation if I had decided to...write notes on every passage where an emendation is made. And yet I would dearly love to see this author illuminated by explanatory notes, which would shine like little stars, freeing the text from mindless distortion.<sup>1412</sup>

In later life Erasmus never expressed similar reservations about his work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*: whereas he promised readers a ‘reborn’ Jerome in 1516, he did not promise readers a ‘different Jerome’ in later editions.<sup>1413</sup> As with the Seneca edition, however, Erasmus did not see his work on Jerome as the last word. In his lengthy 1523 letter to John of Botzheim, Erasmus expressed his reservations about the 1516 *Edition* as well as his wish that others take up the mantel and make a better edition:

Then again, I took Jerome’s letters, which stand so high in both scholarship and style but were currently in a most corrupt text, and corrected them with explanatory notes, separating what is spurious with critical comment. This work I went over a second time in the year 1522, with corrections or additions in not a few places where something had escaped me in the earlier edition. This was printed a second time in the year 1524. In this labour I acquitted myself so well that an attentive reader will easily see that in undertaking this revision my time was not wasted. In this I did not lack ancient exemplars, but they could not protect me in a number of places from the need to conjecture. These conjectures, however, I put forward with such moderation in my notes that no one could easily be led astray by them, but that the reader’s interest might merely be aroused to pursue the trail. And I hope to see someone with the help of more correct copies restoring other passages which eluded me; I shall gladly pay their industry the tribute it deserves, and at the same time they will have no call to criticize my attempts for, though I made many successful restorations, I was obliged in certain passages to make my own the old Greek proverb, ‘As best I could, not as I would’.<sup>1414</sup>

<sup>1412</sup> Allen 2091, 188-197: Opinor autem a nobis rem eo deductam ut, si quis doctior, felicius et otiosius tantam accessionem addat huic aeditioni quantam nos adiecimus superioribus, sperem talem fore Senecam ut minimo cum taedio, maximo cum fructu legi possit. Adiecimus annotatiunculas, sed paucas, nec alibi quam sicubi putarem excludendam depravationem. Alioqui nullus erat futurus annotationum modus, si (quod a Fortunato factum est) quicquid esset correctum annotare voluissemus. Et tamen vehementer optarim hunc autorem scholiis illustratum, veluti stellulis quibusdam quae depravatorum temeritatem submoverent.

<sup>1413</sup> Allen 421, 113: Hieronymus prodibit totus renatus.

<sup>1414</sup> Allen, volume 1, page 14, 22-38 (for the English translation see CWE 9, 1341A, 496-513): Quin et Hieronymianas epistolas, quod hae ut plurimum habent eruditionis et eloquentiae, ita habebantur mendosissimae, castigavimus ac scholiis explicuimus, nota semovimus adiectis censuris. Quod opus rursum recognovimus anno millesimo quingentesimo vicesimo secundo, non paucis locis vel correctis vel additis, quae nos in priore aeditione fefellerant. Hoc rursus excusum est anno 1524. In hoc labore sic versati sumus, ut attentus lector facile deprehensurus sit me non frustra recognitionem hanc suscepisse. Non defuerunt hic veterum codicum praesidia, sed quae non praestarent quin aliquot locis fuerit divinandum. Verum eam divinationem in scholiis ita temperavimus, ut ne quis facile falli possit, sed tantum excitetur ad investigandum lectoris studium. Et speramus fore ut aliquis adiutus emendatioribus exemplaribus restituat et illa quae nos fugerunt; quibus ut libenter tribuamus meritam industriae laudem, ita non habebunt quod nostros conatus insectentur, qui cum multa feliciter restituerimus, in quibusdam coacti sumus vetus sequi proverbium οὐχ ὥς θέλομεν, ἀλλ’ ὥς δυνάμεθα.

Such words are far from the enthusiastic confidence that we remark in the letters and publications surrounding the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. In his 1524 foreword to the 1524-1526 Froben Jerome edition, Erasmus echoed these reservations, even if he expressed far more satisfaction with the text of the 1516 *Edition* than he did about the 1515 Seneca edition:

For my part, I have found almost nothing in the text of Jerome that needed correction; in my own notes I have made some corrections and certain deletions and not a few additions. Places remain, however, through very few in number, where I am not wholly satisfied with my own conjectures; and if anyone can restore these passages more successfully than myself, either by mother wit or by a plentiful supply of exemplars, I shall be happy to salute his industry and give this public service a warm welcome.<sup>1415</sup>

In his foreword to the 1533-1534 Chevallon edition of Jerome's letters printed at Paris, Erasmus told a rather different story about his work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* and about what he had brought with him to Basel in 1514. In hindsight Erasmus remarked that neither his learning nor his already ageing body (he was about fifty years old in 1516) was equal to the task of churning out the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. He also observed that he did not bring to his editorial work on Jerome the care that it deserved:

From my very boyhood I have admired the writings of Saint Jerome, not so much owing to my good judgement as to some secret impulsion of nature. Although this admiration has grown with the increase of time and of whatever learning, if any, that I have picked up along the way, nevertheless, when I undertook the task of correcting his letters and then of illustrating them with *scholia*, I had not yet thoroughly understood their many-sided richness shored up by the supports of languages, studies and arcane letters. For what indeed is there in any kind of book, whether great or small, sacred or worldly, that he [Jerome] did not have at hand. Therefore I confess that I was mistaken in many respects when I undertook this great task with neither the appropriate learning nor with the carefulness that this task deserved. For when I first came to Basel, I had not thought a hair about translating the New Testament: I had written only a few brief *scholia*, and I had decided to be content with these. As for Jerome, I had brought almost nothing with me except my wish to undertake this task.<sup>1416</sup>

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<sup>1415</sup> Allen 1465, 10-16: Nos in Hieronymi scriptis paene nihil deprehendimus quod esset corrigendum. In nostris scholiis nonnulla correximus, quaedam sustulimus, adiecimus non pauca. Restant tamen adhuc loca, sed ea perpauca, in quibus mea divinatio non omnino satisfecit animo meo: quae si quis me felicior, vel ingenio vel exemplariorum copia, restituerit, libenter et hominis industriam exosculabimur et publicae gratulabimur utilitati.

<sup>1416</sup> In order to smooth out my translation I used the French-language edition of Erasmus' letters, *La Correspondence d'Érasme*, ed. Aloïs Gerlo (Brussels: University of Brussels Press, 1981), page 189, 1-17. See Allen 2758, 1-15: Quanquam ab ipsa pueritia, non tam iudicio, quam arcano quodam naturae sensu divi Hieronymi scripta sum admiratus, eaque admiratio mihi semper cum accessione aetatis et si qua est eruditionis accrevit, tamen cum illius epistolas tum castigandi tum scholiis illustrandi provinciam susciperem, nondum variam illam et ex omni linguarum, disciplinarum ac literarum recondita supellectile constructam opulentiam nondum penitus introspexeram. Quid enim est in ullo librorum genere, seu parvum seu magnum, seu sacrum seu prophanum, quod ille non habuerit in numerato? Itaque fateor me non uno modo peccasse,

Erasmus then revealed that it was only at Froben's prodding and pushing that he undertook to finish the hard work of editing Jerome's letters and of writing commentaries for them:

Johannes Froben of happy memory took advantage of my readiness, or more truly my foolhardiness, and attacked both works with many presses, and this when my little body was hardly up to a quarter of the work that these editions entailed! Also, in this time I arranged these texts not for learned men, but rather for men that were pious but nonetheless had very little learning, among whom I had found Jerome's writings everywhere so corrupted that he could hardly be read. The fact that such men were unaware of this problem often made me ashamed and annoyed me. It therefore turned out that I took refuge in that proverb, by which second thoughts are said to be better ones, and with belated diligence I fixed what was earlier done badly from my initial negligence. Time and again I have done this. When later I later learned that the volumes of Jerome's letters were being printed again at Paris, as time allowed I revised some of my notes and I put them out for the benefit of the public of learned men, having decided not to rest until I might prove to the fair reader my faithfulness and my diligence.<sup>1417</sup>

It is hard to know whether or not we would do well to take this statement of Erasmus' old age over the claims that he, Beatus, the Amerbach brothers and others made in the years surrounding the 1516 Jerome *Edition's* publication. To re-phrase Erasmus' question about Jerome in his *Life* and to apply it to this case: Let those people explain how both accounts can be true at the same time, or let them choose which version of Erasmus they prefer to accept.<sup>1418</sup>

Clausi claims that this later letter was in answer to continued criticism of the 1516 *New Testament* and that we cannot take seriously its contention that Erasmus had prepared

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qui ad tam arduum negotium nec parem eruditionem nec iustam curam attulerim. Cum enim primum venissem Basileam, de Novo Testamento vertendo ne cogitarem quidem: scholia modo non nulla paucis verbis annotaram, atque his decreveram esse contentus. In Hieronymum fere nihil attuleram praeter animi propositum.

<sup>1417</sup> Allen 2758, 16-30: Hic mea facilitate aut verius temeritate absusus felicitis memoriae Ioannes Frobenius utrumque opus compluribus prelis aggressus est: cum hoc corpusculum vix quartae laborum parti par esset. Atque id temporis parabam illa non hominibus eruditis sed quibusdam piis quidem illis verum illiteratis: apud quos comperarem Hieronymum sic undequaque depravatum ut ne legi quidem posset; cuius incogitantiae me non semel et puduit et piguit. Supererat igitur ut ad proverbium confugeremus, quo posteriores curae dicuntur esse meliores, et quod priore negligentia commissum erat, posteriore diligentia sarciremus: id quod a nobis iam semel atque iterum factum est. Porro cum accipere apud Parisiorum Lutetiam rursus excudi epistolarum voluminia, ut ex tempore licuit, quaedam loca pridem a me notata recognovi, misique in publicam studiosorum utilitatem: non inquieturus, donec aequo candidoque lectori probarim fidem et industriam meam.

<sup>1418</sup> VH 1145-1146: Expediant igitur isti, qui simul utrumque verum esse possit; aut elegant utro in loco malint Hieronymo habere fidem....



little for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* before his arrival at Basel in the autumn of 1514.<sup>1419</sup> Because of their complexity and of their texture, Clausi believes it unlikely that Erasmus began his commentaries on Jerome at Basel, and he proposes instead that they were the products of long and laboured composition.<sup>1420</sup> Dill believes, however, that it is not unlikely that Erasmus had come to Basel with little material for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1421</sup> Erasmus' documented interest in editing Jerome dates from the late 1490s, and many letters from Cambridge over a decade later testify to his ongoing work on Jerome.<sup>1422</sup> Many scholars believe that he had got quite far with editing Jerome whilst at Queen's College.<sup>1423</sup> At least he undertook some editing of Jerome's letters there along with John Colet's pupil Thomas Lupset, whose help delighted Erasmus.<sup>1424</sup> Notwithstanding such remarks about editing Jerome that we find in Erasmus' letters from his Cambridge years, Dill, following the opinion of his predecessor at the Basel University Library, Fritz Husner,<sup>1425</sup> has brought to our attention convincing evidence that before his arrival at Basel in 1514, Erasmus had apparently limited his work on Jerome to annotations written into the margins of a prior printed edition of Jerome's letters, which was probably his own copy of the 1508 Saccon edition.<sup>1426</sup> We cannot exclude the possibility that Erasmus had consulted many manuscripts of Jerome's letters then available at Cambridge,<sup>1427</sup> but we should also keep in mind all the irons in the fire that Erasmus had at this time. These included a new edition of Seneca, an expanded edition of the *Adages*, the 1516 New Testament, Basil's commentary on the book

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<sup>1419</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 85-86.

<sup>1420</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 48-49. See also Clausi and Milazzo, 'Il commento, gli scolii, Il testa', 94.

<sup>1421</sup> Dill I, 215.

<sup>1422</sup> Dill I, 65. See Allen 141, 16-23. For information about Erasmus' later work on Jerome at Cambridge, see Allen 264; Allen 270; Allen 273; Allen 296, 152-154.

<sup>1423</sup> See, for instance, Ernest Edwin Reynolds, *Thomas More and Erasmus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1965), 90-91. Reynolds claims that Erasmus had at least eight manuscripts of Jerome's letters at his disposition at Cambridge. See Allen, volume 2, page 211, where the prince of Erasmians writes: 'of the manuscripts that Erasmus used for his work nothing seems to be known...It is plain, however, from Ep. 332, 7-9 that the English manuscripts formed an important part of his edition.'

<sup>1424</sup> Allen 270, 58-61.

<sup>1425</sup> Fritz Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 141.

<sup>1426</sup> Dill I, 171-173.

<sup>1427</sup> See note 168 above.

of Isaiah and many smaller works.<sup>1428</sup> All this was in addition to kidney stones, a life-threatening bout of the sweating-sickness,<sup>1429</sup> other sicknesses, coping with English food and drinks and an unknown amount of teaching and lecturing that Erasmus found bothersome.<sup>1430</sup> Given such activity and these challenges, Dill's appraisal seems the more likely to me.<sup>1431</sup>

What we cannot doubt is that Erasmus' commentaries for the 1516 Froben *New Testament* and for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* reached their maturity in Basel, and this in anything but ideal conditions. As the above letters show, the Froben press was a business under serious financial pressures and in which Froben, despite the generosity for which Erasmus praised him,<sup>1432</sup> was not shy about encouraging the late middle-aged Erasmus to take on enormous tasks and to finish them at break-neck speed. When Erasmus came back from England in summer 1515 in order to begin work on volumes one, three and four of the *Edition*, he had to undertake this task along with work on the 1516 Froben *New Testament* and other less weighty, but still time-consuming, works. What is more, if we believe Erasmus' testimony in his introduction to the 1533-1534 Parisian edition of Jerome, Erasmus had to do almost everything for the 1516 Froben *New Testament* at Basel. As we see throughout the Amerbachs' correspondence, the bi-annual Frankfurt book fairs (at this time the fairs took place both in the spring and in the autumn each year) loomed large in the minds of Froben and of many others working at his press.<sup>1433</sup> Karine Crousaz points out that Erasmus himself had probably taken part in the fair in spring 1515 along with Froben's

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<sup>1428</sup> D. F. S. Thomson, *Erasmus and Cambridge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 49.

<sup>1429</sup> His death was bemoaned in the foreword to the 1513 Froben edition of his *Adages*. See AK 483, 25-30.

<sup>1430</sup> See the introductory notes to Allen 225 about Erasmus' bout with the sweating sickness. See also Allen 226; Allen 238; Allen 240.

<sup>1431</sup> Thomson, *Erasmus and Cambridge*, 41. Thomas claims that Cambridge was 'quite rich in Jerome manuscripts: the University Library, for instance, had a volume of the letters, and there were at least seven volumes of Jerome MSS at Peterhouse'. For Erasmus' own summary of his writings at Cambridge, see Allen 296.

<sup>1432</sup> See Allen 1900.

<sup>1433</sup> See, for example, AK 353; AK 463; AK 525; AK 563.

business partner Wolfgang Lachner and Mathias Schürer, and she shows convincingly that Erasmus usually tried to co-ordinate the printing and publishing of his works with the Frankfurt book fair in mind.<sup>1434</sup> The most telling example that she cites is when Erasmus did his utmost to have his rejoinder to Luther's *De servo arbitrio* (*On the Bondage of the Will*) out in time for the 1526 Frankfurt book fair, even breaking it up into two parts for this reason.<sup>1435</sup> This episode took place ten years after Erasmus' work for the 1516 *Edition*, when he had become a much more experienced hand at editing, printing and publicizing. Even in the later years of his work at Basel, however, Erasmus could find the pressures that build up before the Frankfurt book fair crushing:

As the Frankfurt book fair draws near I am always greatly vexed, in part by my scholarly works, for the presses are then at their busiest time (at the Froben press no fewer than six presses are always in activity), and in part by the piles of letters coming in from all over the world, to which I must respond. In the past I paid hardly any attention to my health, but nevertheless my health was never more gravely afflicted than in the time of the fair, such that over the course of fifteen days I was unable even to consecrate an hour to my seriously undermined health.<sup>1436</sup>

According to Erasmus, such pressures, along with the working conditions that they helped to create, were the cause of many avoidable mistakes in his and in others' editions. Writing to Jacob Sadolet from Freiburg in May 1530, Erasmus recounted his troubles not only at Basel but wherever Basel's concerns haunted him:

When six or seven presses are working at the same time, it is not possible to devote oneself to one work alone. What is more, when such short books are in question, it is usually at the time of the Frankfurt book fair, when disorder reigns everywhere in the publishing world. This is the reason for which these books usually come out marred with many mistakes. I have fled Basel, it is true, but the concerns of the printing-house follow me like a shadow.<sup>1437</sup>

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<sup>1434</sup> Crousaz, *Pouvoir*, 65-68.

<sup>1435</sup> See Crousaz, *Pouvoir*, 74; Allen 1678, 16-22. See Allen 1683, 12-26

<sup>1436</sup> Allen 2300, 1-8: Sub nundinas Francfordienses semper quidem obrui soleo, partim studiorum laboribus, ob prela tum maxima tumultuantia (fervent enim in officina Frobeniana perpetuo non pauciora sex prela); partim epistolarum cumulis ex omnibus mundi plagis advolantibus, quibus interdum respondeam necesse est. Quo tempore vix soleo tueri valetudinem: nunquam tamen magis degravatus sum quam hoc tempore, adeo ut nec horulam dare licuerit diebus quindecim graviter afflictae valetudini. I translated this passage with the help of the *Correspondence d'Érasme*, 2300, 1-10.

<sup>1437</sup> Allen 2315, 120-125: Ubi sex aut septem praela fervent, non licet uni vacare negotio. Et si quid talium est libellorum, fere incidit sub nundinarum tempus, cum in officina tumultus plena sunt omnia. Quae res in causa

When writing in 1516 to Guillaume Budé about his work for the Froben *New Testament*, Erasmus described in a similar way the great pressures and the many technical issues that left him unable to devote himself fully to his job as an editor and forced him to overlook or to let slide many problems with the text:

So the work was edited and printed simultaneously, one *ternio* (which is the modern word) being printed off every day: nor was I able all this time to devote myself entirely to the task. At the same time they were printing off Jerome, who claimed a large share of me; and I had made up my mind either to work myself to death or to get myself free of that treadmill by Easter. On top of that we made a mistake about the size of the volume. The printer affirmed that it would run to thirty ternions more or less, and it exceeded, if I mistake not, eighty-three. And so the greatest part of my time was spent on things that were not really my business or had been no part of the original plan; and I was already weary and well-nigh exhausted when I came to the annotations. As far as time and my state of health permitted, I did what I could. Some things I even passed over of set purpose; to many I knowingly closed my eyes, and then changed my opinion soon after publication. And so I prepare the second edition, where I beg you urgently to help a man who is trying hard.<sup>1438</sup>

It is only reasonable to conclude that Erasmus brought this same exhaustion to his work on Jerome's letters for the 1516 *Edition*. We also know from Froben's testimony that there were considerable technical set-backs with the *Edition* owing to a lack of paper, as well as that they were forced to leave out certain works since the exemplars were beyond reading and repair.<sup>1439</sup> When Froben wrote news of these problems to Erasmus about 17 June 1516, Erasmus had already escaped from Froben's 'treadmill', again leaving the final printing in others' hands and doubtless looking forward to a much-needed break from the foregoing months' demands that must have been as taxing to his body as they were to his mind. Not long before this, whilst resting with friends at the Abbey of Saint Bertin after having fallen ill

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est ut multis fere mendis obliti prodeant. Effugi quidem Basileam, sed me, velut umbra corpus, sequuntur officinae negotia. I translated this passage with the help of the *Correspondence d'Érasme* 8, 2315, 153-159.

<sup>1438</sup> Allen 421, 58-71: Edebatur simul et cudebatur opus, excudebatur singulis diebus ternio (sic enim nunc vocant); nec interim tamen licebat totum huic vacare negotio. Excudebatur eodem tempore Hieronymus, qui sibi bonam mei partem vindicabat; et stabat sententia aut immori laboribus aut ante Pasca ex eo pistrino memet explicare. Postremo fefellit nos voluminis modus. Affirmabat typographus fore ut ad triginta plus minus terniones accresceret; excessit autem octoginta tres, ni fallor. Itaque maxima temporis parte consumpta in his quae vel ad me proprie non pertinebant vel ante destinata non fuerant, delassatus iam ac paene fractus ad adnotationes perveni. Pro temporis modo proque valetudine praestiti quod potui. Nonnulla prudens etiam praeterii, ad multa sciens connivebam, in quibus mox ab aeditione a meipso dissensi. Proinde τὴν δευτέραν παρασκευάζω ἔκδοσιν, in qua te magnopere rogo ut conantem adiutes.

<sup>1439</sup> Allen 419, 6-15.

on his way to England, Erasmus wrote to John Fisher, ‘Saint Jerome will appear complete at the next Frankfurt fair’.<sup>1440</sup> Notwithstanding enormous challenges, he had succeeded in leading the final and concluding effort to put together the first printed edition of Jerome’s collected works. Probably among the last things that Erasmus wrote were the 1516 *Edition*’s indexes, his introductory letter to Warham and his *Life of Jerome*.<sup>1441</sup> This does not mean that these efforts had any greater or less importance for Erasmus than other parts of the *Edition*, but it could mean that his time for editing and for writing them was limited. If things were hurried in late spring 1516, when Erasmus left Basel, we can only imagine what conditions were like that summer as the Frankfurt book fair approached. In the introduction to the *Quadruplex Psalterium* found in an appendix to volume eight of the *Edition* and dated 25 August 1516, after explaining all of the cares they took to get things right, the writer of this foreword asked the reader’s forgiveness: ‘If we closed our eyes at any point, the kind reader will easily forgive us, should he take the time to understand the great difficulty of this undertaking and moreover the pressures of time in which we, hurrying, were forced to finish this work.’<sup>1442</sup>

At the beginning of this chapter we saw that Erasmus had to leave behind his Greek-speaking tutor in Paris owing to an outbreak of the plague. Another outbreak of the plague in London in 1511 compelled him to seek refuge at Queen’s College in Cambridge. These were hardly Erasmus’ only encounters with the plague as he pursued his scholarly endeavours throughout Europe. Even if it was ‘a cock and bull story’ meant to amuse to the purported Papal scribe Lambertus Grunnius, Erasmus’ well-known tale about being threatened with death by Bolognians because his northern religious habit resembled the dress of Italian plague-doctors does reflect the truth of a serious outbreak of the plague in Bologna in 1507,

<sup>1440</sup> Allen 413, 32: Divus Hieronymus proximo mercatu Francfordiensi totus prodibit.

<sup>1441</sup> Husner, ‘Die Handschrift’, 135-136.

<sup>1442</sup> See verso side of unmarked folio page coming after 1516 *Edition* VIII, f. 104v (in HAB copy).

just before he moved to Venice in order to work at the Aldine press.<sup>1443</sup> Aldus himself almost died when he caught the plague in Venice in 1498, when the printing of his monumental Greek edition of Aristotle was still underway.<sup>1444</sup> In addition to the plague, Erasmus also had to deal with war. One of his first letters from Italy recounts to Servatius Roger how he was forced to flee Bologna since Pope Julius II was besieging it with the help of French troops.<sup>1445</sup> Later Erasmus saw with his own eyes the triumphal procession of the *Pontifex maximus* into Bologna in November 1506 after its erstwhile ruler Giovanni Bentivoglio had fled the city.<sup>1446</sup> Years later Erasmus recounted many horrible details about this event, when he was terrified by an explosion whilst relieving his bowels and saw first-hand the death and destruction that the Pope and his armies brought to the city.<sup>1447</sup> Erasmus complained to Jerome Busleiden in November 1507: ‘...at this moment studies are remarkably dormant in Italy, whereas wars are hotly pursued. Pope Julius is waging war, conquering, leading triumphal processions; in fact, playing Julius [Caesar] to the life.’<sup>1448</sup> Warfare in Italy did not abate in the years to come. Upon leaving the Aldine press in late 1508, Erasmus complained to Aldus about the ongoing strife in Italy, which we now call the Wars of the League of Cambrai (1508-1516).<sup>1449</sup> Aldus was bankrupted in this conflict’s turmoil and forced to stop printing for years.<sup>1450</sup> Later in Northern Europe, Erasmus experienced on many occasions warfare’s effects on scholarship. To cite only one most appropriate example, after finishing his work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, Erasmus had to cross through a war-zone in order to get back to England and witnessed first-hand a conflict that had caused significant problems

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<sup>1443</sup> We do not know if this Grunnius was a real person or a literary invention. See the introductory notes to Allen 447. See Ephraim Emerton, *Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam* (New York, London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1899), 130-133. For the story of Erasmus’ being mistaken for a plague doctor see Allen 447, 470-496.

<sup>1444</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 119.

<sup>1445</sup> Allen 200, 1-7.

<sup>1446</sup> Allen 203, 7-10.

<sup>1447</sup> See the stirring account of war’s horrors in Allen 1756, 22-92.

<sup>1448</sup> Allen 205, 37-39: Nam in praesentia quidem in Italia mire frigent studia, fervent bella. Summus Pontifex Iulius belligeratur, vincit, triumphat, planeque Iulium agit. Note that Julius Caesar was also *pontifex maximus*.

<sup>1449</sup> Allen 213, 1-2.

<sup>1450</sup> Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 159-167; *Scribes and Scholars*, 156-157.

for the *Edition*, since it blocked Froben's access to his usual paper-makers in Lorraine.<sup>1451</sup>

Erasmus wrote of his experiences to John Fisher:

After leaving Basel, when I was preparing to travel through Lorraine, I ran into soldiers everywhere and saw the country people moving their belongings into the nearest small town. Rumour had it that the soldiers were ready to attack Lorraine, but it was uncertain who sent them. I suspect they were men discharged by the emperor and looking for someone other than him to pay them. What an extraordinary game these Christian princes play! We are in such a state of turmoil, playing dice all the time, and yet we consider ourselves Christians.<sup>1452</sup>

Erasmus' complaint to Fisher reflected a world where plague and war were only some of the major challenges facing scholars as they tried to put together some of the early Renaissance's most important printed editions. Anthony Grafton has pointed out that for too long historians of Classical scholarship have treated 'their early modern counterparts as colleagues – working, presumably, from assumptions and in conditions like their own', showing a tendency 'either to celebrate the few individuals who anticipated modern methods and results, or to revile the multitudes who failed to do so'.<sup>1453</sup> If in the coming chapters of this thesis I point out what may seem to be shortcomings in the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, we must see these in light of the great challenges, often to life and to limb, that early modern scholars, printers, editors and correctors faced.

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<sup>1451</sup> Allen 419, 6-8.

<sup>1452</sup> Allen 413, 41-47: Cum Basilea relicta per Lotharingiam iter facere pararem, passim obvious habui milites, vidi rusticos suppellectilem in proxima oppidula comportare. Rumor erat Lotharingos adoriri velle, sed incertum erat a quo mitterentur. Mihi subolet a Caesare dimissos quaerere qui salarium illius vice dependat. O miros Christianorum principum lusus! Sic tumultantur, sic *κυβεύομεν*, et tamen Christiani nobis videmur.

<sup>1453</sup> Anthony Grafton, 'Correctores corruptores? Notes on the Social History of Editing', in *Editing Texts*, volume 2, ed. Glen Most (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1998), 54.

## ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER X

### Text of commentaries written by Angst and by Erasmus on passages from Jerome's letters *Contra Rufinum* and *Adversus Iovinianum*

AK 487, 12-41: Inter legendum in animum venerunt duo loca Hieronymi, alterum contra Iovinianum, alterum in Ruffinum, quae tu multorum iudicio obtulisti, quod tu ea sagatiori nare observare solebas. Volui tentare, si quid in libris meis aptioris coniecturae im medium proferre valerem. Casu accepi precario a quodam sacerdote vetulum codicem Iovinianarum invectivarum Hieronymi, manu probe ac fideliter exaratum et vetustate venerandum, ut imprimendi inventum facile vincat, in quo non 'Mythra' sed 'Minerva' legitur.<sup>1454</sup> Quare sic legendum censeo: 'Narrant et gentilium fabulae Minervam et Erichthonium vel in capite' (quamvis exemplar meum etiam huic refragetur) 'vel in terra de solo aestu libidinis esse generatos'. Scis enim, quam facile sors transscribentium degeneret (quorum cum segnitie accusatur, velocitas eorum procurrit in facinus) ac transposita aut inversa vel littera vel syllaba huiusmodi errores oboriantur. Quare in hac parte fides fabularum autores appellet.

Similiter dicendum arbitror de altero loco in Ruffinum,<sup>1455</sup> ubi legitur 'a cancro', literis perperam immutatis, pro 'a Satyro', ut Plutarchus optime explanat. Nam huius rei Laertius non meminit neque etiam Cicero, Valerius et Quintilianus, qui Demosthenis varie et multipliciter meminerunt. Dicunt tamen eum linguae errorem industria, non aliquo magistro emendasse. Sed hoc sincerioribus ingeniis diiudicandum remitto; ego, utcumque potui, ad ea, quae quandoque quaesisti, respondi. Alii enim efferunt pilos et caprarum pelles, alii aurum et gemmas ad tabernaculum domini. Sed huius voluntas in laude est, cuius facultas donandi munus non habet.

De Mytra varia leges apud Philippum in XI Apuleii commentario et apud Pium in Asinaria, parum ad Hieronymi (ut mihi videtur) locum facientia. Vale, mi amantissime Bruno, ac vicissim quid de Hipocratis vinculo apud eundem Hieronymum in prima pagina contra Iovinianum sentias, rescribito, et omnes benevolos salutato. Datae Argentinae in convinio noct. VI kl. octobr.

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<sup>1454</sup> Note 2: 1497 Kessler, part 1, f. 7: Narrant et gentilium fabulae Mitram et Erichthonium vel in lapide vel in terra de solo estu libidinis esse generatos.

<sup>1455</sup> Note 3: 1497 Kessler, part 1, f. 108: Quod ille [Demosthenes] in una littera fecit exprimenda, ut a cancro disceret, tu in me criminaris, quare homo ab homine hebraeas litteras didicerim.



**Erasmus' commentaries about passages from *Adversus Iovinianum* cited in Angst's letter:**

Text of passage from *Against Jovinian* 1: 3 from 1516 *Edition* III, f. 8r: Nonne vel per febrem somnare eum putes: vel arreptum morbo phrenetico, Hippocratis vinculis alligandum?

1516 *Edition* III, f. 25r: Hippocratis vinculis.) Hippocratem, pro quovis medico posuit, ac ridicule quidam hoc loco nondum in scirpto quaerent.

Text of passage from *Against Jovinian* 1: 3 from 1516 *Edition* III, f. 9v: Narrant et gentilium fabulae Mitram et Erichtonium. Vel in lapide vel in terra, de solo aestu libidinis esse generatos.

1516 *Edition* III, f. 26r/v: Mithram et Erichtonium.) De Erichtonio meminit Vergilius libro Georgicon tertio. Primus Erichtonius currus et quattuor ausus Iungere equos: de quo Servius hanc asscribit fabulam. Vulcanus impetrato a Iove Minervae coniugio, illa reluctante, effectum libidinis proiecit in terram. Inde natus est puer draconteis pedibus, qui appellatus est Erichtonius, quasi de lite ac terra procreatus. Nam ἔρις lis est, γῆν terra. Apparet autem ex Hieronymi verbis ad consimilem modum natum fuisse Mithram, semine genitali saxis excepto. Quamquam ea fabula mihi nondum comperta est apud authores, nisi forte apud Barbaros huiusmodi quippiam traditum est de Mithra, de quo libros aeditos postea citat Hieronymus.

**Erasmus' commentaries about passages from *Contra Rufinum* cited in Angst's letter:**

Text of passage from *Against Rufinus* 1: 17 from 1516 *Edition* III, f. 92v: Demosthenes plus olei quam vini expendisse dicitur: et omnes opifices, nocturnis semper vigiliis praevenisse. Quod ille in una littera fecit exprimenda, ut a cane rho disceret: tu in me criminaris, quare homo ab homine Hebraeas litteras didicerim.

1516 *Edition* III f. 96r: Ut a cane ρω). Demosthenes cum primum accederet ad rhetoricam, primam rhetoricae litteram non poterat exprimere, nempe, r, quam litteram caninam vocant: hanc enim exprimunt canes rixantes.

**Title page to volume 1516 *Edition* VI (f. 1v), on the minor prophets:**

Bruno Amorbachius Candido Lectori S.D:

Commentarios divi Hieronymi in duodecim prophetas, quos minores vocant hic sextus Tomus continet. In quibus Hebraica, sicut et alibi, in suis addita sunt locis, et item Graeca...Atque hic quidem thesaurus per se preciosissimus, aliquanto tibi charior est futurus, si scieris quam a multis eruditis viris, quorum numero sunt Ioannes Reuchlinus, Conon Norimbergensis, Gregorius Reischius, Chonradus Pellicanus, haud aestimandis vigiliis sit desudatum, ut haec partim ex vetustis exemplaribus, partim ex sagaci coniectura restituerentur, non ignorantibus quo minus superest bonorum authorum, hoc acrius annitendum, ut ab interitu vindicentur.

## PART TWO: CHAPTER XI

### PRIOR EDITORS OF JEROME AND CONTEMPORARY PATRISTIC SCHOLARSHIP

The humanist scholar turned printer in later life, Andreas Cratander (1485?-1540), was the main editor of the Basel printer Adam Petri's 1516 *in folio* edition of Ambrose's works.<sup>1456</sup> Toward the end of his introductory letter to this edition, Cratander quoted Erasmus' 1515 letter to Martin Dorp, in which Erasmus strongly encouraged Christians to learn Greek, Hebrew and Latin and remarked that it would be 'a monstrous impudence for one who knows none of them to expect to be called a theologian'.<sup>1457</sup> Cratander praised Erasmus as a leader of the republic of letters, 'whom the body of learned men throughout the world respect, look up to and admire as though he were the oracle of Apollo at Delphi'.<sup>1458</sup> After this introductory letter, Cratander included an adapted version of the introductory letter that Conrad Leontorius wrote for Johannes Petri's *in quarto* 1506 Ambrose edition. For the most part Cratander followed the text of Leontorius' letter, but he edited it in order to bring it up to date, changed a few passages and words, adjusted the dating from 1506 to 1516 and ascribed the edition's printing to Adam Petri rather than to Johannes Petri. Leontorius'

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<sup>1456</sup> In this chapter I shall refer to this edition as the 1516 Ambrose edition. Cratander (also known as Andreas Hartmann) became a printer himself as of 1518 and undertook to imitate Froben's efforts to print 'learned works', including some of Erasmus' works, until 1536. At this time, Heckethorn recounts, his wife would no longer allow him to continue such 'dirty work'. See Heckethorn, *Printers of Basel*, 167-169. For more on Cratander see *Contemporaries* 1, 357-358. For his editorial accomplishments see *Scribes and Scholars*, 139, in which we learn that by making use of an important manuscript newly discovered in a nearby monastery, Cratander was able to print in 1528 an edition of Cicero which contained five letters to Brutus never seen before and for which his edition remains the unique source.

<sup>1457</sup> Allen 337, 603-608: Quanto praestiterat...Graecas aut Hebraicas aut certe Latinas litteras discere! Quarum cognitio tantum adfert momenti ad divinarum scientiam litterarum, ut mihi sane videatur vehementer impudens earum rudem theologi nomen sibi vindicare.

<sup>1458</sup> 1516 Ambrose (introductory letter): Tu candidissime adulescens enitere, ut explosis trivialibus huiusmodi nugatoriisque praestigiis, Graecas, aut hebraicas, aut latinas litteras primum addiscas. Quarum cognitio (ait Erasmus) tantum adfert momenti ad divinarum scientiam litterarum, ut mihi sane videatur vehementer impudens, earum rudem theologi nomen sibi vindicare. Ecce Erasmi Roterodami sententia: quem omnis doctorum turba ubique terrarum, ut oraculum Delphici Apollinis colit, observat atque miratur.

introductory letter from 1506 praised the city of Basel as blessed with a ‘great and almost divine honour’ since it had grown ‘most excellent on account of its noble and generous citizens and its most diligent and most correct printers’.<sup>1459</sup> When he noted that in recent years, ‘with enormous labours and at incredible expense, the great citizens of this city elegantly printed all of Ambrose’s works’, Leontorius was referring to Johannes Amerbach’s 1492 Ambrose edition printed *in folio* and edited by his old teacher, the Carthusian monk Johannes Heylin (Johannes de Lapide).<sup>1460</sup> Notwithstanding this prior edition’s merits, Leontorius remarked that ‘many most learned men’ had asked for a new printing of Ambrose’s works.<sup>1461</sup> Heeding their call, Johannes Petri published his *in quarto* edition of Ambrose’s works: ‘the eminent printer and outstanding citizen of this same city, assuming great costs, again put his printer’s hand again to the works of the most saintly Ambrose, publishing them printed in smaller form, with cleaner letters and in most beautiful and faultless typeset, as the kind reader can see’.<sup>1462</sup> Leontorius concluded that not only should Basel be regaled with ‘immortal praises’, but also this citizen and printer of Basel, Johannes Petri.<sup>1463</sup>

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<sup>1459</sup> See the *Epistola Proemialis* in 1506 Ambrose, f. 1v: Magno et prope divino honore, perinde ac mihi videtur, lector amice, dignissimam haberi opotere amplissimam civitatem Basileam, non tam quam ut ex nomine eius licet animadvertere sit domus regia, quamquam ubere solo glebaque foecundissima, et Rheno interlabente, sit multum prae aliis civitatibus insignis. Sed quam praestantissimis et amplissimis civibus expunctissimis et emendatissimis impressoribus, hac tempestate sit excellentissima.

<sup>1460</sup> See Heckethorn, *Printers of Basel*, 29: Amerbach on many occasions proved his gratitude towards the monastery. For its Cartularies it appears that Amerbach began as early as 1481 to give a copy of every work he printed to its library. On the birth or death of any of his children, and on other occasions, he made presents to the monastery of money, sugar, pepper, ginger, cloves, parchment, paper, etc. For more on John de Lapide see D’Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 49.

<sup>1461</sup> 1506 Ambrose, f. 1v: Nam superioribus annis singulari divino favore instigatus, maximi ipsius civitatis cives, sanctissimi Ambrosii Mediolanensis antistitis, ingentissimis laboribus, expensis incredibilibus, omnia quotquot ubicumque reperiri potuerunt, divina opera in unum collecta, tersissima et expunctissima impressione maiori forma publicavit.

<sup>1462</sup> 1506 Ambrose, f. 1v: Nunc quoque eadem ipsa opera Ambrosiana cum iterum a plerisque doctissimis viris desiderantur, eodem divino favore collustratum, alium eiusdem civitatis aequae maximum civem prioris civis collegam magistrum Ioannem Petri magnis expensis adduxit, minori quidem forma: tersaque littera (ut videre licet benivole lector) ut denuo sanctissimo Ambrosio impressatricem manum apponeret, iterumque pulcherrime et emaculatissime formis illis excusum, parvo aere tibi comparandum publicaret.

<sup>1463</sup> 1506 Ambrose 2v: Hoc tam commodo et facili repertorio et hac pulcherrima et expunctissima impressione visa, mecum quaeso lector non solum amplissimam civitatem Basileam, sed potissimum illum egregium et

In the 1516 Ambrose edition's introductory letter, this praise was transferred to Anton Koberger and to Johannes Petri's nephew, Adam Petri. In this thesis we have already cited one of the latter's publications: his 1514 edition of Giovanni Andrea's *Hieronymianus*. This edition was printed *in octavo* and entirely in a 'Gothic' fount that appears radically different from the 'Roman' fount which headlines Adam Petri's 1516 Ambrose edition. The difference between the two editions' appearance is striking, and from cover to cover of the 1516 Ambrose edition Petri repeatedly praised its Roman fount as 'most elegant'.<sup>1464</sup> This edition's founts mirrored those of Amerbach's 1492 Ambrose edition. The latter edition's first text, Ambrose's *De officiis* (*On the Duties of the Clergy*), stood out from the rest of the edition, since it was printed in a Roman fount. About the fortieth folio, however, the text *De vocatione omnium gentium* (*On the Calling of All Peoples*) introduced a Gothic fount that continued for the rest of the edition. We see exactly the same pattern of founts in the 1516 Ambrose edition: *De officiis* is printed in a Roman fount but at the forty-first folio page *De vocatione* and all works after it are printed in a Gothic fount.<sup>1465</sup> Even though it is printed *in quarto*, we see the same thing in the 1506 Ambrose edition. After beginning in a Roman fount, a Gothic fount begins on the forty-third folio page. In addition to their similarities in appearance and in pagination, these three editions were connected by blood. Adam Petri's uncle Johannes Petri was Johannes Froben's Franconian countryman and relative. He was

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praestantem civem magistrum Ioannem Petri, qui sua industria, qui aere suo, qui magnis expensis et laboribus hoc tale opus sic omni ex parte politissimum et perfectissimum effecit, immortalibus laudibus extollere, magnificareque summo quo potes studio contende.

<sup>1464</sup> For an example, see the first introductory notice of the 1516 Ambrose edition, copied and adapted from Leontorius' notice for the alphabetic table included in the 1506 Ambrose edition: Quamobrem, carissime lector, ex hoc industriosissimo labore, quem in ipso repertorio animadvertere potes, simul etiam deprehendes, quo studio, qua cura, qua diligentia hic expunctissimus et emendatissimis character impressioni sit donatus, haec Ambrosiana opera sint mundissime et nitidissime excusa. See the end of 1516 Ambrose edition: Tripartitum illud Beatissimi Ambrosii, Christiani fidei vigilantissimi instauratoris, opus, felici iam iam fine clauditur. Quod quidem in officina Adae Petri (ductu ac impensis providi viri Ioannis Koburger, Nurenbergensium civis, bibliopolae de re litteraria optime meriti) tam nitide, quam emaculate tersissimis typis Basileae propagatum, non absque assidua gratiarum actione, quisquis es, lubens accipito. Die. XXV. Men. Iunio. Anno MDXVI.

<sup>1465</sup> See 1492 Ambrose (H: D 276.2° Helmst. 1 at HAB), f. 40 and 1516 Ambrose, f. 41r.

also a close collaborator of Johannes Amerbach.<sup>1466</sup> The 1506 Ambrose edition was the only edition that Johannes Petri published on his own and not in collaboration with other Basel printers such as Amerbach and Froben.<sup>1467</sup> Johannes Petri also worked together with Johannes Amerbach and Johannes Koberger in order to print the Bible as well as Amerbach's celebrated 1506 Augustine edition.<sup>1468</sup>

These three men named Johannes – Amerbach, Koberger and Petri – stood squarely at the centre of a lively community of scholars and printers interested in printing the Church Fathers' works in order to foster a re-birth of Christian life on new terms inspired and guided by the Fathers' example. Johannes Amerbach had been printing Patristic texts for years 'before the great Aldus of Venice had shown the way by his editions of Greek and Latin classics'.<sup>1469</sup> In his presentation of the first printers in Rome in the late 1460s, Maury Feld remarked: 'Printing is by nature a social enterprise. It operates on the assumption that books and readers exist in groups. Humanists, insofar as they were members of a community, were bonded by a consuming interest in particular clusters of texts: the Church Fathers, for example, and the Latin poets, orators and historians'.<sup>1470</sup> In great detail Feld has shown that a significant group of humanists associated with the Papal Curia and including some of the biggest names in contemporary Italian scholarship – such as Cardinal Bessarion and Niccolò Perotti – had gathered together at Rome in support of Giovanni Andrea Bussi and his printers

<sup>1466</sup> For more on Adam Petri see Heckethorn, *Printers of Basel*, 142-153.

<sup>1467</sup> Petri published six editions in co-operation with John Amerbach and with John Froben. See Frank Hieronymus' entry for Johannes Petri in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* 7 (Basel: Schwabe, 2008). According to Heckethorn, Froben was responsible for the engraving on his tombstone and referred to Petri as his patron: Johannes Frobenius ὁμοτεχνικός καὶ ὁμοπατρίς Patrono h. m. ponendum curavit. MDXIX. John Petri published about twenty editions in collaboration with John Froben and with John Amerbach. See Heckethorn, *Printers of Basel*, 140-141. It is of interest to note that John Petri seems to have moved to Florence in the early 1470s and to have helped to print the *editio princeps* of Boccaccio's *Filocolo*. See Chair, *European Printing*, 47. See also *Contemporaries* 3, 73 and AK 27.

<sup>1468</sup> See V. Sholderer, 'Bibliographical Notes', 46-50. See Adr. Mar. Ledebøer, *Notices bibliographiques des livres imprimés avant 1525 conservés dans la Bibliothèque publique de Deventer* (Deventer: J. De Lange, 1867), 5.

<sup>1469</sup> Heckethorn, *Printers of Basel*, 27. See 27-47 for a list of all Amerbach's publications.

<sup>1470</sup> Maury Feld, 'The First Roman Printers and the Idioms of Humanism', in *Harvard Library Bulletin* 36 (1988): 10.

Sweynheim and Pannartz in the late 1460s.<sup>1471</sup> Feld claims that however much profit and other business considerations may have influenced printing choices and methods, Sweynheim and Pannartz were nonetheless ‘servants to an idea and, only in a secondary and derivative sense, purveyors of a commodity’.<sup>1472</sup> From the 1480s and throughout the forty years before Erasmus’ arrival in Basel in 1514, many remarkable northern European scholars associated themselves with Johannes Amerbach as well as with other contemporary printers in Basel, where they served the idea of fostering the ‘re-birth’ of the Church Fathers and a renewed Christianity.<sup>1473</sup> Johannes de Lapide staked out their programme clearly in his introduction to the 1492 Ambrose edition addressed to its printer. After praising the four great Doctors of the Church and specifically Ambrose, de Lapide exhorted Amerbach:

It will now be your duty, ingenious master, that you see through what you proposed and take all the works of this most famous doctor of the Church – this strongest and most forceful defender of the Catholic faith – works which are excellent, health-giving and especially in our times most opportune and necessary, and with skilful diligence and with your new art, print it and multiply it so that all may have access to it.<sup>1474</sup>

In the introduction to his 1498 Bible including Hugh of Saint Cher’s *Postilla* (a series of commentaries), Johannes Amerbach remarked: ‘a great desire to bring to light those Catholic and above all those great ancient writers, whom I believed to be of great use to the Church, has always, does now and will always inspire me’.<sup>1475</sup> Years later, the introductory letter to

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<sup>1471</sup> Feld, ‘Idioms of Humanism’, 9-34; Feld, ‘A Theory of the Early Italian Printing Firm: Part II: The Political Economy of Patronage’, in *Harvard Library Bulletin* 34 (1986), 294-332; Feld, ‘A Theory of the Early Italian Printing Firm. Part I: Variants of Humanism’, in *Harvard Library Bulletin* 33 (1985): 341-377; Feld, ‘Sweynheim and Pannartz, Cardinal Bessarion, Neoplatonism: Renaissance Humanism and Two Early Printers’ Choice of Texts’, in *Harvard Library Bulletin* 30 (1982): 282-335; Feld, ‘The Early Evolution of the Authoritative Text’, in *Harvard Library Bulletin* 26 (1978): 81-111.

<sup>1472</sup> See Feld, ‘Political Economy of Patronage’, 295.

<sup>1473</sup> See Heckethorn, *Printers of Basel*, 4-6. D’Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 49.

<sup>1474</sup> See the third page of the introductory letter to the 1492 Ambrose: Tuum igitur iam erit officium, ingeniose magister, ut quod proposito coepisti facto exsequaris, et illius celeberrimi doctoris ecclesiae fideique catholicae fortissimi ac strenui defensoris tam praeclara, tam salubria et hac nimira tempestate tam oportuna et necessaria opuscula, celeri diligentia arte tua et nova facias et quo cuncti copiam habere possunt, multiplices.

<sup>1475</sup> AK 83, 47-53: Cum igitur catholicos atque imprimis veteres ipsos scriptores, quos ecclesiae arbitrabar futuros emolimento, hos in lucem aedere mirum me desiderium tenebat, tenet, semper quoque tenebit, eo fit, ut haud mediocri possum exilire gaudio, Hugonem et opera mea et industria, ut persuasisti, in lucem prodire

the 1516 Jerome *Edition*'s fifth volume confirmed that Johannes Amerbach had been 'determined to put out the monuments of the four doctors of the Church...in his typeset' and had begun work on the 1516 Jerome *Edition* back in 1507 with a mind 'to restore the holy and ancient authors of the Christian Faith', sparing neither effort nor cost and heedless of his poor health.<sup>1476</sup>

After presenting the broad outlines of Erasmus' work for the *Edition* and for other Patristic editions published after 1516, Ueli Dill has claimed 'that Erasmus' engagement with Patristic scholarship and his judgements on it are not at all original and that his philological work is not pioneering in any remarkable way'. For Dill, 'it is clear that Erasmus' work on Jerome and later on the other Church Fathers was entirely in line with the spiritual and intellectual movements of his time.'<sup>1477</sup> The purpose of this chapter will be to test Dill's thesis by comparing the forewords of other Basel editions of the Church Fathers with the 1516 Jerome *Edition*'s forewords and other paratexts. Both Dill and Pabel have shown that the 1516 *Edition*'s editors relied on the accomplishments of prior printed and manuscript editions as they undertook to order and to classify Jerome's letters.<sup>1478</sup> In this chapter we shall see that they also shared editorial approaches and principles demonstrated in prior editions of the Church Fathers printed at Basel and throughout contemporary Europe.

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posse, quando nulla de spe decidam, quin a summo illo ipso maximo creatore munus haud mediocre sim adepturus.

<sup>1476</sup> See introduction to 1516 *Edition* V (AK 551, 1-26): Ioannes Amorbachius parens noster cum quattuor doctorum (ut vocant) omnia monumenta suis typis procudere destinasset, et iam Ambrosium et Aurelium Augustinum haud infeliciter absoluisset, Hieronymus restabat....nam eo planissime erat animo erga restituendos sacros illos ac veteres Christianae religionis authores, ut huius rei studio, nec rei pecuniariae, nec aetati iam ingravescenti parceret...; For more on John Amerbach see Arnoud Visser, *Reading Augustine in the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13-27.

<sup>1477</sup> Dill I, 30-31. Although with more reservation, Pabel also remarks that 'Erasmus stood in a continuum, not at the crossroads, of the reception and transmission of Jerome's meaning'. See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 355.

<sup>1478</sup> See Dill I, 43-56. Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 1-114.

### THREE EDITORS, AND THREE EDITIONS, OF JEROME'S LETTERS

In the incunable period (i.e. before 1501) over twenty editions of Jerome's letters appeared in print in France, in Germany and above all in Italy.<sup>1479</sup> Most of these editions as well as those published between 1501 and 1516 were based on the editing, the organization and the commentary of the Italian scholar and churchman Teodore Lelli (1427-1466).<sup>1480</sup> When he was still a promising young scholar, the humanist Pope Nicholas V (1398-1447-1455) appointed Lelli to the prestigious Roman Rota, the Catholic Church's highest ecclesiastical court. Later Pius II (1405-1458-1464), the famous humanist elected to be Saint Peter's successor when still a layman, named Lelli to be Bishop of Feltre and entrusted him with many diplomatic missions before handing him titular responsibility for the diocese of Treviso, probably with a mind to push him further along in the Church hierarchy.<sup>1481</sup> In the last years of his life, Lelli enthusiastically collected and read Jerome's works. Convinced that the manuscripts of Jerome's letters were inaccurate and poorly organized, he undertook his own edition.<sup>1482</sup> An early death put an end, however, to Lelli's Church career as well as to his work on Jerome's letters.<sup>1483</sup> Shortly after his untimely death, one of Lelli's relatives, Gaspare de Teramo, facilitated and financed the printing of Lelli's work with the Roman printer Sixtus Riessinger in 1468.<sup>1484</sup> Twentieth-century scholarship has concluded that the 1468 Riessinger edition was the *editio princeps* of Jerome's letters.<sup>1485</sup>

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<sup>1479</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 152. See Pierre Lardet in *Contra Rufinum*, CCSL 79, 214-219.

<sup>1480</sup> For more information on Lelli and his work see Lardet, 198-202.

<sup>1481</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 32.

<sup>1482</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 32-33. R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, volume 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 83-122.

<sup>1483</sup> For more biographical information on Lelli see Luigi Alpago-Novello, 'Teodoro de' Lelli Vescovo di Feltre (1462-64) e di Treviso (1464-1466)', in *Archivio Veneto* 66 (1936): 238-261.

<sup>1484</sup> Dill I, 45-46. See Sharp, 'Bibliographical Essay', 30. For more information see Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 31-32; Lardet, in *Contra Rufinum*, 201-202.

<sup>1485</sup> For an up-to-date summary of this question, see Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 28-31. See also *Scrittura, Biblioteche e Stampa*, volume 2, 1-10. See Sharp, 'Bibliographical Essay', 30.



About the same time, another Italian bishop whose acquaintance we have already made, Giovanni Andrea Bussi, also set about creating an edition of Jerome's letters using Lelli's materials.<sup>1486</sup> For his revision of Lelli's unfinished work Bussi consulted many learned friends, including Theodore Gaza, who helped him with Greek passages in Jerome's letters. He also seems to have consulted manuscripts not available to the editor of the 1468 Riessinger edition.<sup>1487</sup> The Roman printers Sweynheim and Pannartz printed Jerome's letters in two-volume *in folio* editions in 1468 and again in 1470 (hereafter I shall refer to these two editions as the 'Roman' editions, whereas I shall refer to the 1468 Riessinger edition by its printer's name). The 1468 Roman edition seems to have been the first of Bussi's many projects for Sweynheim and Pannartz.<sup>1488</sup> For both the 1468 and the 1470 Roman editions, Bussi wrote forewords dedicated to the reigning Pope Paul II (1417-1464-1471).<sup>1489</sup> According to Clausi, it was through the two Roman editions of Sweynheim and Pannartz that Lelli's text 'became the basis for later editions printed throughout Europe'.<sup>1490</sup> In the next chapter of this thesis I shall show strong evidence that Erasmus and the Froben editors used the Lyonnese printer Jacques Saccon's 1508 edition of Jerome's letters as the *Druckvorlage* for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1491</sup> The 1508 Saccon edition, like the Roman editions that the Froben editors also used, was based on Lelli's text. Erasmus and the Froben editors were, of course, hardly the only printers and editors to depend on the *editiones principes* of Sweynheim and Pannartz for their base-texts. Aldus, for example, never hid the fact that he based his text of Bessarion's *In calumniationem Platonis* on the 1469 Sweynheim and

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<sup>1486</sup> For information on Bussi's use of Lelli's work, see Lardet, *Apologie*, 210-211. For a complete biography of Bussi see *Prefazioni*, xvii-xxxvi. This edition is one of the most thorough resources for information about Bussi.

<sup>1487</sup> See Lardet, in *Contra Rufinum*, 208-210.

<sup>1488</sup> See Feld, 'Sweynheim and Pannartz', 310-315.

<sup>1489</sup> Dill I, 46.

<sup>1490</sup> Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 155. Feld, 'Variants of Humanism', 342.

<sup>1491</sup> Husner, Dill and Clausi all have suggested this, but they do not prove it. See the next chapter for references.

Pannartz edition of this work.<sup>1492</sup> Publishing over fifty-five books at Subiaco in 1465-1467 and fifty-one at Rome in 1467-1473, Sweynheim and Pannartz stopped printing in 1473 and both men died a few years later.<sup>1493</sup> Pannartz's last, unfinished work was a new edition of Jerome's letters, which George Lauer published after the printer's death in 1476.<sup>1494</sup>

In addition to their work with one or both of the 1468 and 1470 Roman editions, Erasmus and other editors of the 1516 Jerome *Edition* used the 1470 edition of Jerome's letters published by Peter Schöffer of Mainz.<sup>1495</sup> This massive tome, which Edward König considers 'one of the most beautiful books from Mainz, if not Peter Schöffer's true masterpiece', enjoyed wide popularity throughout contemporary German-speaking lands.<sup>1496</sup> Co-worker with and heir to Gutenberg, acquaintance of Trithemius and former Sorbonne scribe turned prosperous printer of over 220 incunable editions, Schöffer published a huge and beautiful tome of Jerome's letters that he advertised widely with a printed broadsheet

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<sup>1492</sup> See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 50-51. For more information about this edition see *Die Inkunabeln (Klassik Stiftung Weimar Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek)*, ed. Eva Raffel (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 72. The *Herzog Anna Amalia Bibliothek* seems to have an edition that belonged to Bessarion himself. See Lowry, *World of Aldus*, 48-52. For more on the broader importance of the *editiones principes* of Sweynheim and Pannartz, see Feld, 'Variants of Humanism', 10.

<sup>1493</sup> Feld, 'Sweynheim and Pannartz', 282-335. For a list of all their publications see pages 283-289. For a complete list of editions printed in Rome in the incunable period (1467-1500), see *Scrittura, Biblioteche e Stampa*, volume 1, 1-10. The first book that Sweynheim and Pannartz printed was Cicero's *Epistolae ad Familiares* in 1467. This was followed by Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (1468), Lanctantius' *De divinis institutionibus* et *De ira Dei* (1468), Rodericus Zamorensis' *Speculum vitae* (1468) and Jerome's *Epistolae* (1468), to be followed again by Cicero's *De oratore* (1468/1469). This first Jerome edition was the tenth book printed at Rome in the incunable period according to the editors of *Scrittura, Biblioteche e Stampa*. The sixty-first book was the 1470 edition of Jerome's letters.

<sup>1494</sup> See Chair, *European Printing*, 38.

<sup>1495</sup> For more on Schöffer see, among many other works, Alons Ruppel, *Peter Schöffer aus Gernsheim* (Mainz: Verlag der Gutenberg-Gesellschaft, 1937). See *Peter Schöffer: Printer of Mainz*, ed. Eric Marshall White (Dallas, Texas: Bridwell Library, 2003). In Paul Needham's introduction to the latter book we learn that Schöffer took over his partner John Fust's business when the latter died of the plague in Paris in 1466. See pages ix-xv. See also Cornelia Scheider, *Peter Schöffer: Bücher für Europa* (Mainz: Gutenberg-Museum, 2003), especially pages 7-37. Another good resource is Albert Kapr, *Johannes Gutenberg: Persönlichkeit und Leistung* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1987).

<sup>1496</sup> Edward König, 'Buchschnuck zwischen Druckhaus und Vertrieb in ganz Europa', in *Johannes Gutenberg: Regionale Aspekte des frühen Buchdrucks* (Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, 1993): 132; 138.

distributed before the edition's printing in autumn 1470.<sup>1497</sup> In this broadsheet he promised that he had sought out manuscripts diligently,<sup>1498</sup> re-arranged the letters in 'logical groups' with appropriate headings<sup>1499</sup> and undertaken 'very careful proofreading and general editing'<sup>1500</sup> of the letters themselves.<sup>1501</sup> Lotte Hellinga has shown that in comparison with other incunable editions, the aged Benedictine monk Adrianus de Brielis and his editorial team had in fact painstakingly corrected and proofread Jerome's letters.<sup>1502</sup> Brielis, aged Benedictine monk of Saint Jacob's monastery in Mainz, also instituted a new and distinctive organization of Jerome's letters.<sup>1503</sup> His work for the 1470 Schöffer edition was clearly based on manuscripts different from those on which Lelli based his text,<sup>1504</sup> even if we have good reason to believe that Brielis was aware of Lelli's work as included in the 1468 Roman edition.<sup>1505</sup> The Schöffer edition had no direct descendants in the printed tradition,<sup>1506</sup> but Erasmus and other Froben editors did use it extensively in their work for the 1516 *Edition*. Although we cannot rule out the possibility that Erasmus got many variant readings from

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<sup>1497</sup> For Schöffer's past as a student and scribe see Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, *Peter Schöffer of Gernsheim and Mainz* (Rochester, New York: The Printing House of Leo Hart, 1950), 1-36.

<sup>1498</sup> See Lehmann-Haupt, *Schöffer*, plate 18 for facsimile: Praesens autem Hieronymianus de quo sit mentio porro ultra ducentas epistolas atque libros deo volente devotorum conspectibus praesentabit revisus ob hoc specialiter solemnum ecclesiarum cathedralium et monasterialium bibliothecis quam plurimis.

<sup>1499</sup> See Lehmann-Haupt, *Schöffer*, plate 18 for facsimile: Quantum ad secundum videlicet registrationem placibilem est sciendum quod tanta multitudo epistolarum atque librorum difficulter ut praemittitur congregata sub brevi distinctionum numero est restricta ut videlicet respectu personarum aut materiarum sub certis distinctionibus ipsae epistolae secundum libri sese per ordinem committentur...Qui cum fuerint in exordio voluminis ordinati placibile reddent omne quod sequitur, dum quod lector inquirat facile reperitur.

<sup>1500</sup> See Lehmann-Haupt, *Schöffer*, plate 18 for facsimile: Quantum autem ad tertium videlicet de correctione possibili satis sit dicere huic negotio multum laboris esse impensum.

<sup>1501</sup> See Lehmann-Haupt, *Schöffer*, pages 92-93 for more information about the pre-publication advertisement as well as page plate 18 for a facsimile of this advertisement itself.

<sup>1502</sup> See Lotte Hellinga, 'Editing Texts in the First Fifteen Years of Printing', in *New Directions in Textual Studies*, eds. David Oliphant and Robin Bradford (Austin, Texas: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, The University of Texas at Austin, 1990), 127-150, especially 140-150. See also Clair, *European Printing*, 15-22.

<sup>1503</sup> For more on Brielis, please see Franz Falk, 'Der gelehrte Korrektor Adrian O.S.B. der Peter Schöferschen Druckerei zu Mainz', in *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 16 (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1899), 233-237. Brielis was forced, as was Erasmus many years later, to correct the 1470 Schöffer Jerome edition whilst Schöffer simultaneously printed it on two presses. See Schneider, *Bücher für Europa*, 36-37. See Feld, 'Sweynheim and Pannartz', 296. In much the same way as Sweynheim and Pannartz published Cicero before Jerome, Schöffer had already printed two editions of Cicero's *De officiis* before he turned to Jerome's letters five years later. See Lehmann-Haupt, *Schöffer*, 111-112.

<sup>1504</sup> Dill I, 52-55.

<sup>1505</sup> Falk, 'Der gelehrte Korrektor', 234. See also Dill I, 52.

<sup>1506</sup> Dill I, 52-55.

manuscript copies of Jerome's letters, in his *scholia* he cited many readings of Jerome's letters which agreed exactly with the printed text in the 1470 Schöffer edition but disagreed with the text passed down through Lellian editions. He also cited the 1470 Schöffer edition by name along with one of the Roman editions.<sup>1507</sup>

To these three incunable collections of Jerome's letters we can add the edition printed by Johannes Mentelin at Strasburg about 1469. It too seems to have been based on a manuscript tradition different from that of the Roman editions and the Schöffer edition.<sup>1508</sup> Of the many editions of Jerome's letters printed over the decades to come, Dill believes that for their work on the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus and the Froben editors also made use of at least one of the editions of Jerome's letters published by the Basel printer Nicholas Kessler, most plausibly the 1497 edition. Kessler's three editions of Jerome's letters (1489, 1492 and 1497), like the many Venetian editions and three editions printed in France before 1516, were based on Lelli's text and organization. Unlike the Roman editions and other prior editions, the Kessler editions all included Lelli's *argumenta*.<sup>1509</sup>

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<sup>1507</sup> See Erasmus' commentaries on the *Catalogus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum* in 1516 *Edition* I, f. 140v: Vigintiquinque.) Quidam ex coniectura adscripserant, ζητύσεων, id est quaestionum, cum in vetustissimis exemplaribus, et item in prima aeditione Maguntinens, litteris incorruptis habeatur ἐξυγύσεων, id est enarrationum, suffragante et Sophronio. See 1516 *Edition* II, 49v (to the letter *Quantam in coelestibus*): Hanc non esse Hieronymi, deprehensum est et ab aliis. Etenim in aeditione Romana fuit asscriptum, 'Dicitur, sed non est beati Hieronymi'. In quibusdam exemplaribus habebatur hic titulus, ad Mautitum filiam, in aliis ad Mauritii filiam, in aliis nullius nomen erat adscriptum. 1470 Roman: Dicitur, sed non est, Beati Hieronymi presbyteri ad virgines deo dicatas de institutione virginum. For proof that this was one or both of the Sweynheim and Pannartz editions see the *scholia* beginning *fragrare musco mure* and *et vile in populis* to *Saepe et multum* in the appendix to this thesis. In this same appendix I have also marked *scholia* that show strong proof that Erasmus used the 1470 Schöffer edition. In addition to the *scholia* to *Saepe et multum*, see the *scholia* to the letters *Litterae tuae* (50), *Schedulae quas misistis* (84), *Si cuncta corporis* (108), *Retulit mihi/Primum vos scire* (117) and *Nihil Christiano felicius* (125). See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 50-51. See Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 158-167.

<sup>1508</sup> See Dill I, 51-55 for more information on the editions published at Mainz and at Strasbourg. See König, 'Buchschruck', 136.

<sup>1509</sup> For more on Kessler see Heckethorn, *Printers of Basel*, 50-61. For a comprehensive summary of these editions and a description of what Dill calls the *textus receptus*, see Dill I, 45-51; 80-86.

In the forewords attributed to Bussi and to Brielis as well as in Lelli's introductory notice,<sup>1510</sup> we see that these three editors held four of the same editorial goals which the editors of the 1516 Froben Jerome *Edition* also proclaimed: to explain and to remedy the corruption of the textual tradition; to establish a new base-text; to organize better Jerome's letters; and to present Jerome as a model for both Christian scholarship and for saintly living. It should be noted that Lelli, Bussi and Brielis were aware that spurious materials (*spuria*) had crept into Jerome's works and each undertook efforts to identify them and to point them out to readers. I shall not be treating this issue in depth since Pabel has already done so in considerable detail in *Herculean Labours*.<sup>1511</sup> The paratexts in the Roman, Mainz and Strasburg editions of Jerome's letters confirm his conclusion that 'the critical sifting of works ascribed to Jerome did not begin with Erasmus' and that Lelli, Bussi, Brielis and earlier editors of Jerome's letters shared Erasmus' concern for authenticity. Like Erasmus, they mainly made their decisions about a letter's authenticity from judgements about given letters' style.<sup>1512</sup> As it was for the twelfth-century Carthusian prior Guigues du Châtel, remarks Pabel, 'style was Erasmus' principle criterion for detecting counterfeit texts'.<sup>1513</sup>

Lelli, Bussi and Brielis each emphasized different problems with the manuscript editions of Jerome's letters. For Lelli, it was bad organization that skewed and marred the message of the 'most famous Saint Jerome', whose works were 'confused' since they had previously been transcribed 'without any order' and according to each scribe's whim.<sup>1514</sup> Whatever their shortcomings, Lelli did not wish 'to condemn prior exemplars' but simply to

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<sup>1510</sup> This notice was reproduced in all of the Kessler editions as well as in the 1508 and 1512 Saccon editions.

<sup>1511</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 142-170. See also Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 33.

<sup>1512</sup> For discussion of how editors before Erasmus treated the *spuria* see Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 143-162.

<sup>1513</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 156.

<sup>1514</sup> Lelli from 1508 Saccon (introductory notice to readers): Quia celeberrimi ecclesiae doctoris Sancti Hieronymi epistolas rerum ac materiarum varietate confusas et sine ullo ordine impressas seu scriptas agnovimus. Nam prout sors tulerat vel pro nutu unusquisque descripserat, ita ut inter se intricatas: modo funebres, modo consolatoriae, interdum de fide, et inserentur aepistolae prioribus minime coherentes. Attendentes igitur quid commoditatis legentibus bona conferret partitio singula singulis ordinavimus locis.

put Jerome's letters in better and clearer order, hoping thereby to please both the pious reader and Jerome himself.<sup>1515</sup> Bussi was less conciliatory and sharply criticized the manuscript tradition. In his foreword to the 1468 Roman edition, he claimed, as Erasmus did over forty years later, that Jerome's letters 'had been corrupted by the carelessness of unskilled men to such a point that they could in no way be understood'. Bussi asserted that by painstaking work he had been able to take away, 'if not all, then surely some mistakes' that had crept into the textual tradition.<sup>1516</sup> In his new foreword to the 1470 Roman edition, Bussi wrote:

I think many people may believe that it a rather easy task to correct books corrupted by the carelessness of scribes. If they will carefully read now our two volumes of Jerome's works and closely compare them with those books that are commonly read, I suspect that they will believe otherwise. At last understanding this they might complain gravely of the heedlessness of some scribes who corrupted the codexes almost under their own eyes and in their own cells, such that hardly any sense can be drawn from them. Perhaps they will then admit at least, and with a grateful conscience, that we have accomplished something of worth.<sup>1517</sup>

Bussi nonetheless understood that his edition was hardly perfect: 'If anyone notices a mistake somewhere, which may very easily happen, may he kindly take up the advice to remove this error for himself rather than blame our sluggishness, mindful of Horace's words: "In the course of a long work it is allowable for sleep to steal over the writer."' <sup>1518</sup> Bussi's forewords to the 1468 and 1470 Roman editions were highly polemical, written in a charged

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<sup>1515</sup> Lelli from 1508 Saccon: Nec tamen exemplaria priora damnam, sed nobis ipsis et caeteris qui ordinatius atque distinctius Hieronymi epistolas habere desideraverint consulimus, sperantes a doctore glorioso ac sancto et lectoribus piis comprobari.

<sup>1516</sup> See *Prefazioni*, 3: ...satis visum est si in recognitione librorum, qui quidem imperitorum incuria depravati usque adeo erant, ut intelligi nullo modo posse viderentur, adhibito labore, mendas si non valerem omnes aliquas certe tollerem et, amicorum consilio, si qua vertenda essent efficerem Latina, si nimis obsoleta, ad usum nostrum sermonemque redigerem. For more on Bussi's collaboration with Sweynheim and Pannartz and with other contemporary scholars see *Prefazioni*, xi-lxii. We see Bussi's idea that he had been able to take away 'if not all, then surely some mistakes' in Jerome's letters repeat in Erasmus' foreword to the 1515 Seneca edition as well as in Beatus' letter to Erasmus about this edition. See Allen 325, 101-103. Allen 328, 29-35.

<sup>1517</sup> *Prefazioni*, 6: Puto multos, tamquam minime arduum opus, accepturos libros describentium incuria magna sui parte depravatos emendare. Qui si attente perlegerint duo iam nostra divi Hieronymi vigilarum volumina praeclara contulerintque cum iis libris qui prius vulgo lectitabantur, secus, mea opinione, iudicabunt. Perspicientes enim ipsum iam tunc graviter queri de quorundam importunitate librariorum qui paene in ipsius oculis ac cellula codices suos corruperant ut vix sensus ullus elici posset, forsitan non aliquid egisse grata conscientia pronuntiabunt.

<sup>1518</sup> *Prefazioni*, 6: Si quis autem erratum alicubi esse, quod fieri facile potest, a nobis deprehenderit, ipse quoque potius mendam tollere quam socordiae nos arguere boni consultum volet, illius Horatiani prope oraculi memor: 'Operi longo fas est irrepere somnum'. This is from Horace's *Ars Poetica* 358.

intellectual climate in which Pope Paul II had just imprisoned some of Rome's leading lay humanists at the Castel Sant'Angelo on 'charges of heresy, sodomy and subversion'.<sup>1519</sup>

These forewords were clearly meant to serve a variety of goals, something that Bussi later admitted in an introductory letter addressed Paul II's successor Sixtus IV, in which he remarked that he had never even expected Paul II to read the forewords dedicated to him.<sup>1520</sup>

Bussi candidly put forward to Sixtus IV his general approach to foreword-writing:

It is moreover my opinion that the intellects of the learned should always be liberal in praise of princes, no matter what these princes are like. For there is no way that, once moved by the fire of praise, what they would not do from their natural inclinations they will do simply in order to confirm the praise of their virtue, even if it is false praise. Therefore, whoever my prince is, I always cultivate him.<sup>1521</sup>

In our own times when complaints about lack of attention to the humanities from political and economic authorities are so frequent, we might do well to keep in mind Bussi's approach. It worked for him, for about the same time that Bussi wrote the above foreword, Sixtus IV hired him to take charge of one of the world's newest and most promising research institutes in the humanities, the Vatican Library.<sup>1522</sup> Ulterior motives aside, Bussi's laments about the state of prior editions of Jerome's letters and other works were sincere,<sup>1523</sup> even if his own editorial work fell far short of the mark he set.<sup>1524</sup>

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<sup>1519</sup> Feld, 'Political Economy of Patronage', 300-309. Anthony D'Elia, *A Sudden Terror* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>1520</sup> *Prefazioni*, 73: Epistolas meas cum ad Paulum II pontificem, gloriosum praedecessorem tuum, in librorum quos recognoscebam initiis scriberem, ab eo tamen lecturum iri non putabam; gratis me, quod ad illum attineret, magna ex parte laborare perspiciebam. Sed non debebam ille esse ingratus et haud mediocria beneficia ab eo prius accepta non potui absque reprehensione negligere.

<sup>1521</sup> *Prefazioni*, 73: Et praeterea haec mea est opinio, semper principibus, qualescunque illi sint, doctorum ingenia debere in laudibus esse liberalia. Fieri enim non potest ut laudis ardore commoti, quod naturali inclinatione non facerent, id agant ad praedicationis vel fucate de sua virtute confirmationem. Equidem quisquis sit princeps meus, illum semper colam.

<sup>1522</sup> *Prefazioni*, xxviii.

<sup>1523</sup> See, for example, his foreword to Lucanus' *Pharsalia*, where he attacks those that criticize his editorial efforts in *Prefazioni*, 40. See also his foreword to the 1471 edition of Vergil's works in *Prefazioni*, 43: ...Tu tamen mihi etiam Aetnam Maronis et Cirin, integras quidem sed inemendatas, Catalecton vero etiam corruptius et imperfectum tradidisti.

<sup>1524</sup> See Kenney, *Classical Text*, 8-12. See the foreword to the 1469 edition of Julius Caesar's *Commentaries* in *Prefazioni*, 28: Dictatoris Caesaris Commentarios iam pridem multa diligentia me recognovisse memineram, quos cum a me impressores nostri proximis superioribus diebus efflagitarent, exemplaria illa penes me non esse excusabam. Non potui tamen illis, ut different, persuadere.

In his forewords Bussi also noted that the inclusion of spurious letters took away from Jerome's message. He cited Giovanni Andrea's *Hieronymianus* and remarked that despite Andrea's undoubted skill as a canon-lawyer, he 'most unfortunately ascribed many filthy things, or I might say ridiculous things (*nugalia*), to such a great doctor'.<sup>1525</sup> Nonetheless, Bussi 'tolerated, rather than agreed to' the inclusion of many letters attributed to Jerome in the Roman editions. Some of these, 'although not bad and unworthy of reading', were to Bussi's mind 'far below Jerome's splendour and pre-eminence'.<sup>1526</sup> In the Schöffer edition's introductory letters, Brielis presented the inclusion of apocryphal letters as one of the biggest problems in the manuscript tradition of Jerome's letters. He wrote two different forewords to the 1470 edition, one of which was meant for learned members of the 'ecclesiastical order' (*omnibus ecclesiastici ordinis devotis zelatoribus veritatis*, or 'Schöffer 1' in the following footnotes) and the other for 'all Christians' (*omnes Christianae religionis homines*, 'Schöffer 2' in the following notes).<sup>1527</sup> These two different letters introduced two separate printings of the 1470 Schöffer edition.<sup>1528</sup> In the introduction dedicated to 'all Christians', Brielis remarked that the editor of the *Hieronymianus* had been so 'inflamed with the fire of praising Jerome's name that he included whatever letters he found that were said to be Jerome's among Jerome's genuine letters without any further examination of the letters' style or of

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<sup>1525</sup> *Prefazioni*, 8: Divum ipsum Hieronymum sciebam quibusdam in locis scriptorum suorum veluti novum lustrum facere; nonnullos item praestantis auctoritatis viros inque suis facultatibus sapientiae et famae singularis, inter quos est pontificii iuris decus egregium Iohannes Andreae Bononiensis, qui veneratione atque admiratione multa divum Hieronymum suspiciens et prosequens, aegerrime ferebat illota (ne *nugalia* dixerim) quaedam tanto doctori tribui, quae ex illius officina nequaquam prodire a mediocriter etiam studiis, vel primis labris imbutis possent iudicari...

<sup>1526</sup> *Prefazioni*, 8: In priore veluti in praesenti quoque volumine multa conniventibus oculis, nonnullis amicorum servientes, inseri toleravimus, potius quam consensimus, ne pedaria quidem, ut aiunt, sententia decernendo quae aliorum sunt et eorum sane quaedam, qui divi Hieronymi, ut cum Statius dicam, vestigia semper debeant adorare, ut ipse quid sentiam affirmem, non modo attingere, sed ne longissimo quidem intervallo queant prospectare. Ea tamen minime sunt mala aut scitu indigna, etsi Hieronymi splendore et fastigio sint minora.

<sup>1527</sup> See Dill I, 51-55.

<sup>1528</sup> For more on these two different forewords to the same edition and for details about their printing see Falk, 'Der gelehrte Korrektor', 235; Hellinga, 'Editing Texts', 142-143.



their manner of speech'.<sup>1529</sup> Although Brielis did not directly criticize the organization of prior editions, he gave a great amount of attention in his introductory letters to explaining his own detailed re-organization of Jerome's letters. Each editor emphasized different points and such introductory words were surely meant to help to sell editions. We can conclude, however, that Lelli, Bussi and Brielis saw many of the same problems in the transmission of Jerome's letters which Erasmus and the Froben editors decried in the 1516 *Edition*.

To organize Jerome's letters in a better way was likewise important for these three editors. In his work on Peter Schöffer, Helmut Lehmann-Haupt pointed out that 'the publishing of books did not originate with printing, but was well developed by the time the typographic printer appeared on the scene'.<sup>1530</sup> Although Lelli had good reason for his complaints about the poor organization of Jerome's letters, Pabel has shown that the manuscript tradition was not altogether haphazard and that many of its precedents and accomplishments found their way into early printed editions.<sup>1531</sup> The organization of one Florentine manuscript now at the Vatican Library led Pabel to conclude that 'on the eve of the event of print', it 'anticipated the editorial reconstruction of Jerome's epistolary œuvre spearheaded by Lelli' and 'was the first to publish the Church Father's letters in chronological order'.<sup>1532</sup> Another Vatican manuscript annotated by Valla also shows evidence of studied organization based on themes and subject-matter in Jerome's letters.<sup>1533</sup> Lelli, Bussi and Brielis were therefore not the only editors before Erasmus who tried to re-organize Jerome's letters into more logical and user-friendly categories. Lelli explained his division of

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<sup>1529</sup> Schöffer 2: Illud tamen legentes admonuisse velim Ioannem Andream iuris civilis pontificique peritissimum ac beati Hieronymi studiosissimum magna cum diligentia ubique eiusdem epistolas et quaeisise et in suum Hieronymianum tamquam in unum corpus coegisse quaeisitas. In qua re tanto extollendi Hieronymiam nominis ardore flagravit, ut quascumque epistolas invenerit quas hieronymi esse dicerentur, nullo prius iudicio adhibito stili caracterisque dicendi omnes hieronymianis inter veras ipsius epistolas annumerarit.

<sup>1530</sup> Lehmann-Haupt, *Schöffer*, 37.

<sup>1531</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 142.

<sup>1532</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 132. The manuscript in question is Vat. Lat. 348.

<sup>1533</sup> This is Vat. Lat. 355-356.

the letters into three parts and their sub-division into tracts (*tractatus*) arranged according to larger themes:

Mindful therefore of what convenience a good ordering of the letters would give to readers, we have ordered single letters in their rightful places by keeping to a three-part division. From here I then set about sub-dividing as best as we could each of these three parts into tracts. And we began with those letters that confirm the Catholic faith; those wherein the writer defends himself against charges of heresy, knowing that those things that treat nobler matters ought properly to be put before others. Then we put down those letters that treat questions about both the Testaments or about other expositors of the holy writings. Then we put down in separate tracts those that contain a Christian discussion of faith and of morals, which teach according to their needs each state of life, each sex and each age. In addition to these we put down a table of contents or a register by which desired letters may more easily be found.<sup>1534</sup>

Lelli's organization of Jerome's letters into three separate parts allowed the accustomed reader to find a wanted letter quickly and with ease.<sup>1535</sup> In his foreword to the 1470 Roman edition, Bussi brought up his own efforts to organize Jerome's letters by adopting and by improving upon Lelli's unfinished work,<sup>1536</sup> and Lardet's analysis has shown that for the Roman editions Bussi clearly undertook considerable revision of Lelli's proposed organization.<sup>1537</sup> Briet used a great amount of space in his two forewords in order to describe his efforts to re-organize Jerome's letters according to twelve 'distinctions'. These 'distinctions' were designated by a letter of the alphabet and each one tried to include letters 'that seem to be connected in some respect' – by the people to whom they are addressed, by

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<sup>1534</sup> 1508 Saccon introduction (attributed to Lelli): Attendentes igitur quid commoditatis legentibus bona conferret partitio, singula singulis ordinavimus locis trifariam observantes partium ordinem. Deinde unamquamque in tractatus subdividentes quo melius potuimus epistolas applicavimus. Atque ab illis exorsimur, quibus fides catholica roboratur atque ab heresum impugnationibus defenditur, scientes illa digne aliis praeponi debere, quae de digniori tractarent materia. Deinde quae de utriusque testamenti questionibus, vel de scripturarum sanctarum expositoribus tractant, adiecit. Demum vero de moribus atque virtutibus quibus conversatio christiana, prout unicuique gradui, sexui, vel aetati congruit instituitur, distinctos subiecit tractatus. Super haec tabulam seu registram fabricantes, quo facilius desiderata inveniri possint. Lelli concludes with this notice to the reader: Ad Lectorem. Prompte et expedite invenire cupiens lector ea quae hic annotata sunt, animadvertat notas numerorum numeralem designare ordinem illum qui in marginibus superioribus operis continetur. Litteras vero eisdem appositas notas in minori margine laterali contineri, ut ea quae cupis ad oculum statim demonstrentur. Et qualem haec, talem et caeterae observant ordinem partis. Vale. This foreword is also found in all the Kessler editions.

<sup>1535</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 34.

<sup>1536</sup> *Prefazioni*, 6: Prius igitur divi Hieronymi epistolarum partem fere dimidiam cum illius opusculis, mediocri mea diligentia emendatam, in manus hominum misimus. Nunc alteram partem in qua fere reliqua eiusmodi omnia collecta sunt tradimus. Tertium volumen quomodo perquiramus, in quo quicquid reliquum divini huius doctoris scriptorum invenitur, post ista redigatur, solerti animo meditatur.

<sup>1537</sup> Lardet, in *Contra Rufinum*, 201-204.

their subject-matter, by their ordering or by the time in which they were written.<sup>1538</sup> By means of this organization, Brielis promised that ‘any competent reader would easily be able to make a magisterial list of the materials that he has read and wishes to mark out to be read again in the future’.<sup>1539</sup>

To organize Jerome’s letters better occupied Johannes Amerbach and his editors long before Erasmus arrived at Basel. In the surviving letters between Erasmus and Reisch, we see that Reisch, or most likely Amerbach himself, had already come up with some kind of new organization of Jerome’s letters.<sup>1540</sup> Reisch wrote to Erasmus in October 1514:

But as to my arrangement, which is really that of the late lamented Amerbach senior, if you change this you will in many people’s opinion inflict no small loss on the booksellers, and equally perhaps on readers too; for the letters are mingled in great confusion among the books and shorter treatises in the printed editions of other men, as you can see well enough. I often hear criticisms from better scholars than myself of this way of grouping things and giving them titles, which results in a whole book being numbered as a letter, although it is not usually so referred to, and printed as a letter, and little or no classification of the subject matter is maintained. The arrangement of Augustine’s works in distinct volumes or parts has given general satisfaction, however, including to those who bear the cost of the work, for whom the former arrangement has proven of very little use. Consequently I hope that you will preserve, if possible, the traditional order of the various parts, except that letters necessary for the understanding of works or treatises should stand in front of them; and then let what is wrongly attributed follow.<sup>1541</sup>

Reisch seems to have come up with a new organization of Jerome’s letters and to have implemented it for the first four volumes of the 1516 *Edition*, at least in part. His pleas went unheeded, however, since Erasmus chose instead to keep to a more traditional ordering of

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<sup>1538</sup> Schöffer 1: In primis itaque se offert registrum sub duodecim letteris alphabeti totidem epistolarum distinctionibus secretum in singulis distinctionibus ordinando ad invicem eas epistolas quae aliquo respectu videlicet personarum, materiarum, ordinis aut temporem connexe videntur: et cuius materie epistolas quelibet distinctio contineat sub cuiuslibet lettera annotatur. Ipse vero epistolae duplici numero consignantur. Uno scilicet voluminis, altero distinctionis.

<sup>1539</sup> Schöffer 1: Nam si lector huius epistolaris praeditus fuerit ingenio conpetenti, facile poterit de materiis quas legit et observare voluerit in futuro iterum relegendas tabulam facere magistralem.

<sup>1540</sup> See Allen 308; 309.

<sup>1541</sup> See Allen 309, 8-21: Ordinem meum, quin immo Ammerbachii senioris feliciter defuncti, si immutaveris, iudicio multorum iacturam non parvam vendentibus facies, forte non minorem legentibus; nam confuse valde epistolae cum libris et tractatibus collocantur in aliorum impressuris, uti cernis. Saepius audio a doctioribus me reprehensam istiusmodi aggregationem et titulationem, ut liber integer sub epistolari numero, quo tamen allegari non solet, imprimatur, et modicus vel paene nullus materiarum ordo servetur; dum Augustini opera in tomos seu partes distincta placere multis, et his qui impensas laborum faciunt; nam parum conduxit talis distinctio.

Jerome's letters following Lelli's precedent, part of which he had already prepared at Cambridge.<sup>1542</sup> 'And so I shall follow the traditional order except for the spurious pieces', Erasmus explained to Reisch, 'and to replace the order designed by you I shall construct a table to show both orders and provide the convenience of both'.<sup>1543</sup> Erasmus finally drew up three tables of contents for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*; these are more comprehensive and, at least for modern reader, much easier to use than those we find in any prior printed edition of Jerome's letters. The first of these he labelled the 'table of all the works of Jerome with *censurae* divided into five categories',<sup>1544</sup> the second the 'table arranged according to the order of the volumes',<sup>1545</sup> and the third the 'table arranged according to the order of the letters'.<sup>1546</sup> Before the first table, Erasmus explained his arrangement of Jerome's letters:

In order to make clearer how much the Christian world owes to Jerome, it seems just to put together an index of all that he wrote, which we have separated into five [major] categories. This first is those about which there is no doubt that Jerome is their author. The second comprises those about which one might justly doubt if they are his or not. The third are 'pseudepigrapha', which falsely claim Jerome as their author, of which there are three [sub-] categories. The first [sub-category] comprises those that are learned and not unworthy to be read. The second comprises those most rashly ascribed to Jerome but by other writers. The third comprises learned letters whose titles advertise them to be someone else's but with which Jerome's works have been mixed. The fourth [major] category comprises those letters in which Jerome's letters and those of others are mixed or, to put it more precisely, jumbled up with each other. The fifth comprises those that have been lost either by the fault of time or have not yet come to light, so that henceforth learned men might be spurred to find them.<sup>1547</sup>

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<sup>1542</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 138-141.

<sup>1543</sup> Allen 308, 22-24: Ita que veterum ordinem sequemur exceptis adulterinis, et loco ordinis quem tua paternitas excogitavit, indicem ponemus, ut duplex sit ordo duplexque commoditas. For Erasmus' complete description of his proposed organization see Allen 308, 1-47.

<sup>1544</sup> 1516 *Edition* I (folio not marked, page 31 in digitized version at the Munich Digital Library, or 'MDL'): Index omnium operum Hieronymi cum censuris in quinque digestus ordines per Erasmum Roterodamum.

<sup>1545</sup> 1516 *Edition* I (pages 43-50 in MDL): Index iuxta ordinem tomorum.

<sup>1546</sup> 1516 *Edition* I (pages 50-57 in MDL): Index iuxta ordinem litterarum.

<sup>1547</sup> 1516 *Edition* I (page 31 in MDL): Iam vero quo magis perspicuum fiat, quantum Christianus orbis debeat Hieronymo, visum est indicem omnium quae scripsit attexere, quem in quinque digessimus ordines. Primus habeit γνήσια, de quibus nulla dubitatio sit, quin ab Hieronymo sint aedita. Secundus habebit ἀμφιβόλως νόθα, de quibus iure quis addubitet illius sint nec ne. Tertius, ψευδεπίγραφα, quae falso titulo Hieronymum authorem mentiuntur, atque huius ordinis, tres erunt classes. Prior indicabit erudita nec indigna lectu. Secunda impudentissime tributa Hieronymo aut aliis authoribus. Tertia docta, sed suis titulis authorem testantia, quae tamen Hieronymianis lucubrationibus fuerant admixta. Quartus ostendet ex Hieronymianis et alienis commixta, seu ut verius dicam confusa. Quintus indicabit ea quae aut culpa temporum interciderunt, aut certe nondum prodierunt in lucem, ut hinc ad vestigandum incitentur studiosi.

By dividing the letters into volumes based on the subject-matter and on the questions that they treated, Erasmus and the Froben editors ‘*grosso modo*’ followed Lelli’s three-part division into dogmatic, exegetical and moral-theological writings’.<sup>1548</sup> There were, however, important differences in these editors’ organizations and the spirit underlying them. Pabel has noted that Erasmus used the same word that Lelli used (*instituto*) in order to describe Jerome’s letters that dealt with how rightly to lead a Christian life.<sup>1549</sup> But whereas Erasmus emphasized in the foreword to the 1524-1526 Jerome *Edition* that he put first those letters dealing with the ‘institutions of Christian life’ and how to be better Christians since these things should be ‘our foremost care’,<sup>1550</sup> Lelli put forward those things that ‘confirm the Catholic faith...knowing that those things that treat nobler matters ought properly to be put before others’.<sup>1551</sup>

For the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus added a second table of contents in which he listed Jerome’s letters according to their place in the *Edition*’s first four volumes, where each of these volumes kept generally to a certain theme or subject-matter. The first volume held letters dealing with the ‘institutions of Christian life’, the second the so-called *spuria*, the third polemical letters against heretics and detractors and the fourth letters about Biblical interpretation. In his table of the letters ‘according to volume’, Erasmus put down next to each letter’s first two or three words a short description of the letter’s main point, to whom the letter was written and the number of the folio and of the volume where the letter could be

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<sup>1548</sup> Dill I, 183.

<sup>1549</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 141. See 1516 Edition I (page 31 in MDL): Tertia pars principalis aepistolarum sive tractatum Sancti Hieronymi. de moribus atque virtutibus intitulat quibus christiana conversatio instituitur

<sup>1550</sup> See introduction to 1524-1526 Froben Jerome edition in Allen 1451, 1-5: Quae pertinebant ad institutionem vitae Christianae, quoniam huius rei primam oportet esse curam, in primum contulimus tomum: in argumentis hunc ordinem sequuti, ut a perfectioribus orsi paulatim per gradus veniremus ad inferiora, deinde ad lapsos, postremo ad exempla.

<sup>1551</sup> 1508 Saccon edition: Atque ab illis exorsi sumus, quibus fides catholica roboratur atque ab heresum impugnationibus defenditur, scientes illa digne aliis praeponi debere, quae de digniori tractarent materia.

found.<sup>1552</sup> In his third table Erasmus listed the letters alphabetically according to the first two or three words with which each given letter or book begins. To refer to Jerome's letters by their first two or three words was one traditional way of citing the letters (e.g. *Audi filia*).<sup>1553</sup> In his introduction Erasmus explained the reasoning behind this third index (which I have found a most helpful reference tool while writing and editing this thesis):

So that the reader might more readily find that for which he is looking, I have added a third index of each book or of the beginnings of letters according to alphabetic order, such that if one come across anything cited from Jerome in this way, 'Jerome in the letter, *Si tibi putem*', soon by means of this index he will find the letter in question. For indeed, this manner of citing seems to me quicker and more effective than to have to cite so many parts, tracts, letters and pages, such that for one task, in place of one memory there is need for a triple one.<sup>1554</sup>

Here Erasmus had in mind Lelli's organization of Jerome's letters into parts, tracts, letters and pages. By ordering Jerome's letters in three new tables, Erasmus succeeded in making the 1516 *Edition* more readable than the Roman and Schöffler editions, as well as all other prior printed editions of Jerome's letters. Still, there were important continuities. For example, the 1470 Roman edition and the 1516 *Edition* followed the same format in their first volumes: including an introductory letter, a biography of Jerome (*Plerosque nimirum* for the Roman edition, Erasmus' *Life* for the *Edition*) and a table of contents whose purpose and goals the editors explained at length. Pabel has shown the common features of Lelli's organization and of Erasmus' organization of Jerome's works<sup>1555</sup> and remarks that 'from a

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<sup>1552</sup> For an example, see 1516 *Edition* I (page 43 in MDL, under heading 'Index primi tomi'), where we read: Quanto amore et studio. De laude vitae solitariae. Ad Heliodorum sodalem. f. 1.

<sup>1553</sup> For an example, see 1516 *Edition* I (page 50 in MDL, under heading 'Index iuxta ordinem litterarum digestus'), where we read: Abraham tentatur. De conversatione Blesillae. Ad Marcellam. To. 1. fo. 69.

<sup>1554</sup> 1516 *Edition* I (page 50 in MDL): Iam quo promptius sit lectori quod quaerit invenire, tertium adiecimus indicem singulorum librorum, aut epistolarum initiis, iuxta litterarum ordinem digestis: ut si quid occurrerit ex Hieronymo citatum ad hunc modum, Hieronymus in epistola, *Si tibi putem*, mox per hunc indicem in promptu fuerit locus. Atque haec citandi ratio mihi sane visa est tum brevior, tum expeditior, quam illa per tot numeros partium, tractatum, epistolarum, et paginarum: ut pro unica, triplici sit opus memoria.

<sup>1555</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 137-147.

comparative typographical and taxonomical perspective', Erasmus' *Life* 'corresponds to and replaces the *Plaerosque nimirum*' in previous editions of Jerome's letters.<sup>1556</sup>

In order to establish a reliable base-text of Jerome's letters, Erasmus and the Froben editors time and again claimed to have compared 'most ancient exemplars' and to have followed them whenever possible.<sup>1557</sup> While Lelli does not write about his methods for establishing a base-text in his brief introductory comments, in the first years of the printing-press both Bussi and Brielis clearly stated that they had undertaken detailed collation of older editions of Jerome's letters, which were necessarily manuscripts in their day.<sup>1558</sup> In his foreword to the 1468 Roman edition, Bussi claimed that he, although the least of doctors (*doctorum abortivus*), had tried to correct editions 'that had been corrupted by the carelessness of unlearned men to such a point that they could in no way be understood'. 'If I was not able to take away all errors,' Bussi wrote, 'I was surely able to take away some of them'.<sup>1559</sup> Notwithstanding such corruption, Bussi claimed that he took on the challenge of organizing Lelli's works and 'making them easier to read' with a mind to inspire men more able than he to create better editions of Jerome's works, knowing that often 'from the most

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<sup>1556</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 200.

<sup>1557</sup> See Allen 333, 64-69: Excuditur iam dudum divus Hieronymus totus, imo renascitur, antehac adeo depravatus ac mutilus ut nunc non tam restitutus quam primum aeditus videri possit. Hunc non aestimandis surdoribus, multis collatis exemplaribus iisque pervetustis emendavimus, adiectis in loco scholiis, quo possit inoffensius legi. Scis enim apud hunc passim infulciri quae lectorem obscuritate remorentur. See also the introductory letter to 1516 *Edition* VI, f. 1v: ...Ioannes Reuchlinus, Conon Norimbergensis, Gregorius Reischius, Chonradus Pellicanus, haud aestimandis vigiliis sit desudatum, ut haec partim ex vetustis exemplaribus, partim ex sagaci coniectura restituerentur, non ignorantibus quo minus superest bonorum authorum, hoc acrius annitendum, ut ab interitu vindicentur.

<sup>1558</sup> As a reminder, in Erasmus' time such neutral words as *codex* and *exemplar* could be used to mean either a manuscript or a printed edition. See Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 69-75. See also pages 1-8; 185-194.

<sup>1559</sup> *Prefazioni*, 3: Verum cum doctoribus et maioris industriae viris illam muneris dignioris partem concedi oportere censuerim, de alienis linguis, Hebraea scilicet, Punica, Arabica, Graeca et ceteris in nostram linguam clarissimorum scripta in omni facultate traducendi, mihi doctorum abortivo, qui docti nomine non sum dignus, satis visum est si in recognitione librorum, qui quidem imperitorum incuria depravati usque adeo erant, ut intelligi nullo modo posse viderentur, adhibito labore, mendas si non valerem omnes aliquas certe tollerem et, amicorum consilio, si qua vertenda essent efficerem Latina, si nimis obsoleta, ad usum nostrum sermonemque redigerem.

meagre beginnings, great things are born'.<sup>1560</sup> In his foreword to the 1470 Roman edition, Bussi described in greater detail and with a polemical edge his efforts to put together a more correct text by collating manuscripts and by consulting learned friends, even if resources at hand often left much to be desired:

Given the great variety in the Latin copies that I was able to obtain, through the careful collation of all these, through frequent revisions of them and through the consultation of many friends, and having long used [Jerome's] writings from my earliest years and having read most Latin authors, I restored his works, although for many letters I was lucky to find even one soiled exemplar barely legible owing to the great number of errors and fragments.<sup>1561</sup>

Bussi protested that he did not follow the path of 'crude and hurried correction', but rather set about establishing more correct and authentic Latin texts through careful correction with the help of an editorial committee.<sup>1562</sup> Although he did not state this principle outright in his introductory letters to the Jerome editions, in forewords to other works that he edited for Sweynheim and Pannartz in 1468-1472, Bussi affirmed his belief that 'older exemplars' could often prove better than newer ones. In his foreword to 1472 edition of Vergil's works, Bussi referred to a 'most ancient exemplar (*antiquissimum exemplar*) of Vergil written out in large characters'. After analyzing it he concluded: 'I confess that I believe this old exemplar

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<sup>1560</sup> *Prefazioni*, 3-4: Nuperrime vero cum divi Hieronymi libellos epistolasque perplures mendose satis scriptas et ex diversissimis codicibus prius collectas, in certum ordinem a doctissimo et optimo patre Theodoro Tarvisino episcopo redactas qui apud tuam sanctitatem, dum in mortalibus ageret, apocrysarii munus referendarii cum magna commendatione semper implevit, amici quidam ad me delatas impedio poposcissent ut mea diligentia emendatiusculae redderentur, quo minore difficultate legi possent; excusata rei magnitudine ingeniolique mei tenuitate, ea conditione rogantibus annui ut meo exemplo ad hoc utilissimum opus aptiores incitarem, sciens saepissime evenisse, ut ex initiis tenuissimis magnarum rerum primordia nascerentur.

<sup>1561</sup> *Prefazioni*, 7: Latina codicum quotquot habere valui diversitate et omnium assidua versatione frequentique repetitione, plurium amicorum consultatione, longo scriptorum eius a primis usque annis usu et magnae partis Latinae linguae auctorum lectione mediocriter redintegravi, quanquam in pluribus epistolis vix unum exemplar idque salebrosum et minime facile intellectu propter mendarum multitudinem et fragmenta quiverim invenire; quod nisi Deus ipse magis quam homines tunc iuvisset, fortasse efficere nequisivissem.

<sup>1562</sup> *Prefazioni*, 8: ...ex quo etiam ut de Homero Aristarchus, de nostro Plauto M. Varro, de multis item plaerique, ita ipse in scriptis suis fecit de Hieronymo; quae hoc loco ideo commemoranda tantum non etiam explicanda putavi, ne nimium me crassa et praecipiti emendationis Minerva usum quispiam arguendum existimaret.



to be more correct than ours in many passages and in many of its words'.<sup>1563</sup> In his foreword to the works of Cyprian (1471), Bussi described his efforts to copy out Cyprian's works 'from an older exemplar' when a student at Paris, believing at the time that posterity would later thank him for his efforts.<sup>1564</sup>

Brielis did not write in great detail about his endeavours to establish a reliable base-text of Jerome's letters, but we know that he also compared a variety of manuscripts. He cited by name both the widespread *Hieronymianus* and Guigues du Châtel's letter that questions the authenticity of several apocryphal works and was included in at least two twelfth-century manuscripts.<sup>1565</sup> Treating Giovanni Andrea's inclusion of several apocryphal works in the *Hieronymianus*, Brielis believed that only the letters which Giovanni Andrea included and which he also found in older manuscripts after comparing several exemplars (*concordantibus exemplaribus*) should be included in the current edition.<sup>1566</sup> Elsewhere in his forewords Brielis promised that his collection 'followed more formal and more ancient exemplars' and

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<sup>1563</sup> See *Prefazioni*, 43: Hucusque epistolam cluseram, amantissime Pomponi, in superiore edenda impressione Virgiliana, in qua tu testis es optimus nostros artifices plus, nescio quomodo, quam communiter solent, dormitasse. Dein ipse antiquitatis totius studiosissimus, Maronis tamen aliquanto amicitior, dedisti operam ut ex manibus tuis antiquissimum Virgilii exemplar, maiusculis characteribus descriptum, vix carptim possem evolvere. Erant in eo, quod meministi, minus primae Bucolicorum Eglogae, Georgica Aeneisque absoluta. Praeterea nihil. Fateor aliquibus in locis et verbis codicis mihi vetustum illum iudicatum esse nostro veriore. Et si fieri poterit, quod spero, ut possim diutius illum per dominum eius in meis manibus tenere, diligentissime curaturum me spondeo ut tertia fiat impressio ne quid omnino videatur ex Virgiliana a nostris maiestate desiderari.

<sup>1564</sup> *Prefazioni*, 53: Converti me igitur plurimo incitatus ardore ad sublimis et animi et facundiae virum, divum Cyprianum Carthaginensem episcopum, et eius Epistolas in manibus sumpsi, fidentiore ob id conscientia quod olim adolescens famatissimis in scholis Parisiensibus agens, quo propter urbis celebritatem et studiorum fervorem atque animi cultum capessendum concesseram, ex vetustiore exemplari eas manu mea descripseram, ratus (quod ita evenit) minus me in eo codice difficultatis et tamen apud tuam sanctitatem et doctissimorum hominum mentes non minus gratiae habiturum. Beatus Rhenanus owned this edition by 1507 at the latest. The copy remains at Selestadt's Humanist Library (shelf-mark K 1110a).

<sup>1565</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 152.

<sup>1566</sup> Schöffner 1: Demum ne venerabilis patris Guidonis Carthusiensis videam ignari qui suis scriptis iohannem andree fecit attonitum adeo ut certas epistolas Guidonis iudicio repudiandas. cum scrupulo inter suas admiserit potissimam causam allegantes stili distantiam. Nos concedentes unicuique cum apostolo ut in suo sensu abundet stili iudicium illis comittendo quibus solitum est sicut de vino ita de ingenio disputare eas epistolas quas iohannees andree admisit concordantibus exemplaribus pro antiquis censuimus admittendas.

noted that when it came to proper names, ‘many exemplars disagreed’.<sup>1567</sup> In his second introductory letter to ‘all Christians’, Brielis claimed that whenever there was any trouble with the letters’ titles, he ‘followed the more correct exemplars of the ancients’.<sup>1568</sup> In the broadsheet that advertised the 1470 Schöffer edition, Brielis promised that he had corrected Jerome’s letters ‘after having investigated great ecclesiastical and monastic libraries with special attention and as thoroughly as possible’.<sup>1569</sup>

Especially challenging to contemporary editors was the need to treat the Greek words and expressions with which learned Church Fathers such as Jerome and Ambrose generously seasoned their Latin writings. Erasmus, as we have seen, claimed that the text of Jerome’s letters had been ‘not so much corrupted as virtually destroyed’ owing to ‘illiterate scribes whose habit it is to copy an accurate text inaccurately and make a faulty text worse, to leave out what they cannot read and to corrupt what they do not understand – for instance, the Hebrew and Greek words which Jerome often brings into his letters’.<sup>1570</sup> In order to treat this grave problem Erasmus claimed to have ‘replaced with the greatest care’ the Greek that ‘was either missing entirely or supplied wrongly’.<sup>1571</sup> Bussi and Schöffer also recognized this problem and dealt with it in different ways. In forewords to many of his editions published

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<sup>1567</sup> Schöffer 1: In attitula commibus epistolare istud formaliora et antiquiora sequitur exemplaria. Schöffer 1: Etiam avisandum de quibusdam nominibus propriis in quibus solent exemplaria discordare ut Hieronymus ad aletam vel ad letham, ad antonium vel ammonium, ad vergines Hemonenses vel Chremonenses et in sitibus ne quis stulto se labore conficiat cum utrumque in idipsum eveniat.

<sup>1568</sup> Schöffer 2: Praeterea in inscriptionibus epistolarum ad amicos ubicumque se nobis difficultatis aliquid optulit super antiquorum emendacioraque exemplaria secuti sumus ut in ‘a decime’ qua in hoc numero volumine Damasa intitulatur, alibi ad Rusictum episcopum Narbonensem inscribitur.

<sup>1569</sup> See a readable copy of this broadsheet in Falk, ‘Der gelehrte Korrektor’, 237.

<sup>1570</sup> Allen 396, 143-152: Quod superest non depravatum erat, sed prorsus extinctum et oblitteratum; idque partim quidem illitteratorum vitio scribarum, qui solent ex emendatis inemendata describere, ex mendosis mendosiora reddere, praetermittere quod non legunt, corrumpere quod non intelligunt, velut Hebraea Graecaque vocabula quae frequenter intermiscet Hieronymus; sed multo sceleratius a sacrilegis haud scio quibus studio detructa permulta, addita nonnulla, mutata plaeraque, depravata, sordidata, confusa paene omnia, ut vix ulla sit periodus quam eruditus inoffense possit legere.

<sup>1571</sup> See Allen 335, 271-272: ...Graecae, quae vel deerant omnino vel perperam erant addita, reposuimus diligenter. See also Allen 396, 270-271: Graeca quae vel omissa fuerant vel perperam addita restituimus.

with Sweynheim and Pannartz, Bussi lamented the corruption of Greek texts.<sup>1572</sup> He recognized that in many places Jerome's letters could not be understood because of scribes' mistakes.<sup>1573</sup> Aware that his efforts fell short of the ideal, Bussi nonetheless tried to correct the Greek text in the letters and enlisted one of the most famous contemporary Greek scholars for this endeavour, Teodore Gaza.<sup>1574</sup> In Schöffer's Mainz, knowledge of Greek was a much rarer commodity than in contemporary Rome, which became home to many Greek speakers who had fled the recent fall of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>1575</sup> Brielis therefore took a different approach. In his introductory letter addressed to churchmen, Brielis noted that since few in his editorial team had any knowledge of Greek, and none enough of it, the edition would not include a Greek text. He invited readers to write in their own Greek text for troublesome places in Jerome's letters.<sup>1576</sup> In his foreword to 'all Christians', Brielis simply stated that he had transliterated all Greek works into Latin letters and hoped that their 'meaning would be preserved through Latin transcriptions'.<sup>1577</sup>

Erasmus and the Froben editors clearly believed that Jerome, or at least the Jerome whom they chose to see and to portray, was a model for contemporary Christians. Erasmus

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<sup>1572</sup> See his foreword to *Auli Gellii Noctes Atticae* in *Prefazioni*, 20: Nam et multa Latina erant librariorum inscitia, negligentia, socordia, depravata, et multo plura Graeca, propter linguae desuetudinem, corrupta, trunca, manca. Ea quoque ipsa quae integra exstabant a Latinorum tamen perpaucis, propter graecitatis inscientiam, intelligebantur.

<sup>1573</sup> *Prefazioni*, 7: Restabant cognitu necessaria in primis Graeca, sine quibus, ut praecipua fere Latinorum volumina, ita nullo modo huius sacratissimi doctoris legi scripta ad intelligendi profectum poterant.

<sup>1574</sup> Gaza was a renowned expert in Greek. Erasmus later helped to edit Gaza's Greek grammar, the *Grammatica Institutio*, and lavishly praised it in his introductory letter to Froben's edition of the grammar published in November 1516, in time to be sold along with the 1516 *Edition*. For Erasmus' introductory letter see Allen 428. See note 57 in Allen 209 for information about Erasmus' prior work with Gaza's grammar. See *Prefazioni*, 7.

<sup>1575</sup> See Feld, 'Sweynheim and Pannartz', 301-335.

<sup>1576</sup> Schöffer 1: Postremo quod epistolare nostrum graecis elementis responsum non est: in hoc commitati consultum est in quo pauci sunt qui graece norint. Si quis aut norit et vere noverit inveneritque aliquid imperfectionis in hac parte perficiat ipse in suo libro si iudicaverit expedire. Meminerit tamen qui sicut asinus? Ad liram sic est graeci sermonis ignarus ad homerum. Etsi in latinitate gnarissimus sit. pro eodem tamen habebit si canat homerus sibi vel balbutiat infans.

<sup>1577</sup> Schöffer 2: Ceterum in hoc numero volumine ubique pro graecis verbis latina posuimus tum quorum pauci admodum sunt qui graecas litteras teneant, tum quorum idem sensus per latina verba servatur.

concluded his *Life* with praise of Jerome that repeated ideas which we find time and again in contemporary Patristic scholarship: ‘Let each sex and each age study him, read him, drink him in. There is no kind of teaching which cannot use his support, no way of life which may not be formed by his precepts.’<sup>1578</sup> The same motivation inspired prior editors of Jerome such as Lelli, who, as we have seen, also pointed out the universal appeal and appropriateness of Jerome’s letters in his introductory notice. In his foreword to the 1470 Roman edition, Bussi likewise praised Jerome for his unmatched services to Christian learning and living. As for open and clear speech, Bussi asked, ‘who was ever greater in nature than this doctor?’<sup>1579</sup> He then continued with words that remind one of Erasmus’ panegyric in his *Life of Jerome*:

He teaches all men with the greatest richness, he refutes freely, he draws them in with his kindness, and he challenges them with his example. He is the leader (*vexillarius*) of morals, the standard-bearer (*signifer*) of religion, the merchant of paradise, the very example of the Christian life, much better in his life than he was great in doctrine, even if he was most learned of all, the teacher of all ages after him, the illuminator of those ages before him, the glory of both and crowned with the highest honour. But we are trying to compare a tree to a forest, a sea to water, stars to the heavens. Whoever wishes to read another writer when he has Jerome at hand chooses to cast aside the greatest delicacies in order to fill himself with cheap bread.<sup>1580</sup>

Jerome’s combination of worldly and godly learning put in the service of the Church stood at the core of Bussi’s dedicatory letters, in which he tried to defend and to promote humanist learning in a tense intellectual climate under the reign of Paul II.<sup>1581</sup> Writing about the same time in far different circumstances in Germany, Brietlis was no less enthusiastic about Jerome.

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<sup>1578</sup> VH 1561-1563: Hunc omnis sexus, omnis aetas discat, evoluat, imbibat. Nullum doctrinae genus est, quod hinc non queat adiuvari; nullum vitae institutum, quod huius praeceptis non formetur.

<sup>1579</sup> *Prefazioni*, 9: Etenim quod Socratem dixisse ferunt prudenter atque doctissime, hominum pectora esse oportere aperta atque fenestrata uti non occultos clandestinosque habeant sensus, sed patentes ad considerandum atque explicatos, quis unquam eiusmodi naturae magis fuit, quam divus hic doctor?

<sup>1580</sup> *Prefazioni*, 9: Qui enim gestavit in fronte et in lingua voluntatem, qui maxima omnes homines docuit ubertate, redarguit libertate, allexit beneficio, provocavit exemplo. Morum vexillarius, religionis signifer, paradisi mango, vitae christianae exemplar, multo melior vita quam maior doctrina, etsi omnium maximus eruditione, saeculorum post se excultor, priorum illustrator, utrorumque gloria et merito corona praecipua. Sed nos in silvam linga, aquam in mare, stellas in firmamentum conamur adferre. Qui alium, praesente Hieronymo, quaerit legere, cibario pane, relictis esculentorum deliciis, cupit impleri.

<sup>1581</sup> Feld, ‘Variants of Humanism’, 342-343.

In his letter to churchmen Brielis praised generously all the Church Fathers by name,<sup>1582</sup> but nonetheless gave Jerome a special place among them: ‘With special attention but without any prejudice to the other Church Fathers, the writings of the glorious Jerome are to be more more zealously recommended to all devout and experienced’ Christians.<sup>1583</sup> In his letter to ‘all Christians’, Brielis went further and ranked Jerome squarely above the other Church Fathers: ‘Among these four most saintly men, although all are most excellent, nevertheless Jerome surpasses them by the richness of his speech and the sweetness of his words, such that his oration seemed to flow from his mouth sweeter than honey.’ Brielis thought so much of Jerome and his works that he could ‘scarcely believe that anyone who has not thoroughly read and imbibed Jerome could be a good Latin Christian’.<sup>1584</sup>

### CRATANDER’S EDITING AND PATRISTIC EDITIONS AT BASEL

Cratander’s comments for the 1516 Ambrose edition, printed and published by Adam Petri before Froben had finished printing the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, were products of contemporary Basel’s scholarly community, which itself had inherited the accomplishments and concerns of over a generation of printed Patristic scholarship, coming above all from Italy.<sup>1585</sup> Cratander shared concerns and goals with Lelli, Bussi, Brielis and the Froben

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<sup>1582</sup> Schöffner 1: Omnibus ecclesiastici ordinis devotis zelatoribus veritatis digne sunt et amabiliter amplexanda sanctorum quattuor scripta doctorum Gregorii Ambrosii Augustini atque Hieronymi: quamquidem ipsis tanque parietibus quadrifarie super fundamentum evangelicae veritatis solide stabilitatis. Et ductu sancti spiritus in sublime porrectis mille clipeis et omni armatura fortium in eisdem suspensis undique circummunita sancta mater ecclesia in medio domus suae perambulans in innocentia sui cordis, filios suos quos parturit suo sponso, quietis fovet in gremio unitatis et caritatis vinculis federatos.

<sup>1583</sup> Schöffner 1: Et haec quidem cum ita se habeant de singulis quattuor praementionatis doctoribus, speciali tamen affectu quod absque aliorum offensa sit dictum, scripta gloriosi Hieronymi sunt quibusque devotis atque exercitatis attentius memoranda.

<sup>1584</sup> Schöffner 2: Inter hos quattuor sanctissimos viros (quamquam omnes praestantissimi sunt) tamen Hieronymus ita dicendi copia sermonisque suavitate excellit ut ex eius ore fluxisse melle dulcior videatur oratio. Ad cuius opera perlegenda ita cunctos hortari ausim ut paene crediderim neminem esse posse bonum et Christianum et Latinum qui non assidue fuerit in ipsius lectione versatus.

<sup>1585</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 34.

editors.<sup>1586</sup> Notwithstanding two editions of Ambrose's works published in Basel by Johannes Amerbach in 1492 and by John Petri in 1506, the second of whose title page promised an edition 'most accurately revised and newly printed',<sup>1587</sup> Cratander believed that there was still much to be done in order to establish an authoritative text of Ambrose's works. In his introductory letter, Cratander invited readers to see 'with how much study and with what vigils these editions of Ambrose have been printed in new founts as lovely as they are faultless'.<sup>1588</sup> He claimed to have undertaken considerable corrections and criticized the misleading promises of printers and editors who falsely claimed to have edited and corrected texts thoroughly. For him, such promises had already become a tiresome cliché in introductory materials and paratexts by 1516:

There is no need for flashy words, as the truth will shine. I do not want you to number me among those who promise on their title pages that they have restored and corrected every little thing, but in fact have restored nothing, or even destroyed and corrupted many things in the text.<sup>1589</sup>

Cratander believed that the biggest challenge facing the editor of Ambrose's works was to establish a reliable Greek text, to which effort he gave his especial attention.<sup>1590</sup> According to him, there was 'such a great corruption of the Greek words' that 'they could not be uncovered even by the most learned'. Without access to the 'archetypes', moreover, it would be most difficult even for someone most expert in Greek to reconstruct a true Greek text.<sup>1591</sup>

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<sup>1586</sup> This edition was published by June 1516, when the 1516 Jerome *Edition's* printing was entering its final stages. See Dill I, 239-252.

<sup>1587</sup> Title-page of 1506 Ambrose reads: Divi Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis omnia opera denuo accuratissime revisa et noviter impressa.

<sup>1588</sup> 1516 Ambrose (introductory letter): Verum quo studio, quibusque vigiliis ii Ambrosiani codices, novis iterum formulis, quam nitide, quamquam emaculate sint excusi, tute lector suavissime, periculum facito.

<sup>1589</sup> 1516 Ambrose (introductory letter): Nihil equidem verborum phaleris opus, ubi res veritas enitescit. Sed nolo me his adnumeres, qui singula in fronte librorum se restituisse atque correxisse pollicentur, cum in processu vel restaurarint nihil, vel complura destituerint corruerintque.

<sup>1590</sup> 1516 Ambrose (introductory letter): Ego nonnulla hoc in Ambrosiano opere, praeserti graeca, acrioram quandoque limam exposcere ingenue fateor.

<sup>1591</sup> 1516 Ambrose (introductory letter): Quandoquidem Graecis tanta inerat depravatio, ut nedum inconcinna mutilarum dictionum cohaerentia lectorem disturbaret, immo pleraque vocabula, ex consonantium creberrimo concursu, nulla vocali littera intermediente, nec concipi, nec effari a quopiam quantumvis docto possent. 1516 Ambrose: Quo sit, ut illa, absque eorundem archetypis, ab omnibus prorsum labeculis absolvere, cuique etiam Graecanicae linguae peritissimo, difficillimum duco.

Cratander and his editorial team therefore consulted ‘the exemplars of the original books’ and ‘corrected the errors of many famous men’s work on this edition’. These efforts notwithstanding, they left the ultimate corrections of many passages to scholars of the future who might have access to better and more correct exemplars.<sup>1592</sup> Cratander also adopted Leontorius’ considerable work on the organization and the classification of Ambrose’s works. In a second introductory letter to the 1516 Ambrose edition, a re-working of Leontorius’ introductory letter for the 1506 Ambrose edition, Cratander promised readers ‘an alphabetical table gathered with great labour and with painstaking diligence’, with whose help readers might more easily find what Ambrose said and thereby better pursue and enrich their studies. Throughout the edition’s paratexts, Cratander praised this alphabetical index (a three-part *repertorium*), calling it ‘most exquisite’ and noting that it had been ‘assembled with marvellous zeal’.<sup>1593</sup> If only for its size, Cratander surely had reason to be proud. The alphabetic index of subjects found in Ambrose’s works stretched out over 170 folio pages!

In his introductory materials Cratander explained in detail his organization of the 1516 Ambrose edition, which included the same basic elements that we see in the 1516 Jerome *Edition* and in Lelli’s work. In addition to the letters themselves, the 1516 Ambrose edition began with prefatory materials and a dedicatory letter, included a lengthy table of materials and a life of Ambrose ‘most elegantly written by the bishop Paulinus’.<sup>1594</sup> Like other editors of the Church Fathers, Cratander was passionate about his subject and believed that he was

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<sup>1592</sup> 1516 Ambrose (introductory letter): Itaque et nos consultis originalium librorum exemplis, aliquotque illustrium vivorum hac in re nequaquam poenitendorum ope, quos deprehendimus errores, eliminavimus. Caeteros cuilibet studioso, saniora si forte exemplaria nactus fuerit, expungendos relinquentes.

<sup>1593</sup> See the *Epistola proemialis et commendatitia* in the 1516 Ambrose: Sed ut tibi, lector suavissime, labor in quaerendo quid Ambrosius in omnibus his voluminibus dicat, minuatur, et diligenti studio sedulitati tuae provideatur, ecce tabulam alphabetariam, magno labore et exquisita industria collectam, quam alphabeticum repertorium nuncupari placuit, in omnes Ambrosianos codices tibi subserviens in principio vel in fine, appressimus. Cuius ordinationem breviter adverte, te docebo.

<sup>1594</sup> 1516 Ambrose (title-page): Divi Ambrosii episcopi Mediolanensis omnia opera accuratissime revisa atque in tres partes nitidissime excusa. Eiusdem sanctissimi Ambrosii vita a Paulino episcopo eleganter conscripta. Repertorium in tripertitum opus beatissimi Ambrosii alphabetica serie certissimoque foliorum numero exquisitissime digestum.

doing his part to spread the powerful message of a great ‘proponent of the orthodox faith’, ‘restorer of the Christian religion’, ‘inciter of all virtues’ and ‘hater of vices’, whose great works were foretold by a miracle that occurred upon his birth, when a swarm of bees was said to have flown in and out of his mouth as he was sleeping in a cradle.<sup>1595</sup> Cratander set Ambrose and his excellent knowledge of Latin and Greek in contrast with the ‘most unhappy, worn-out, sterile’ and false theologians who ‘did nothing in their academies except spin webs and make a mockery of their own work and that of others’, vying for glory with their ‘cunning and superstitious snares’.<sup>1596</sup> Some forty-five years before Cratander penned the above remarks, in his foreword to the 1470 Roman edition Bussi had already condemned the ‘host of scribes’ that ‘loved paper more than doctrine’ and ‘paraded their ignorance’, taking great care to decorate their books in purple but nonetheless ‘gushing forth ignorance’ since they were ‘puffed up with vain cares’ and ‘hardly even touched their books’.<sup>1597</sup> In their expressions, allusions, ideas and convictions, throughout Europe humanists of Erasmus’ generation were tied to the Roman scholarship of Bussi’s lifetime. Writing about the

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<sup>1595</sup> See the beginning of the introductory letter to the 1516 Ambrose: *Etsi, humanissime lector, satis superque ex his praeclarissimis operibus cuilibet, vel somnuculo clarescat, quantus hic noster divus Ambrosius orthodoxae fidei fuerit propugnator, quantusve Christianae religionis instaurator, quam sedulus omnium virtutum institutor, vitorumque detestator. Evidentissimo tamen indicio fuit id quod in sanctissimi Ambrosii tenerrima infantiae aetatula contigit prodigium. Ex ore etenim ipsius adhuc pueri in cunis soporantis, examen apum in aera progredi, regredique vicissim adspiciebatur. Quid hoc aliud, quam Ambrosium istum, et sapientem divinorum mysteriorum interpretem, et facundissimum Christiani nominis declamatorem futurum praesagivit?*

<sup>1596</sup> See 1516 Ambrose (introductory letter): *Hallucinantur igitur qui Graecis caeterisque id genus bonis litteris neutique insudandum blatterant, eas ipsas conrugatis naribus et caperata fronte calumniantes. Sic quoque suis sophisticis captiunculis atque portentis, quibus ipsi sunt infecti magis quam imbuti, quosvis generosae indolis adolescentulos, a saluberrima clarorum utriusque linguae authorum doctrina conantur avertere. Hos idcirco optimorum studiorum subsannatores, quibus etiam alabaster plenus unguenti putrescere videtur, tu florida iuventus velut Scyllam et Charybdim caveto. Tuae, crede mihi, felicitate, ipsi infelicissimi, effoeti steriles quam invident. Profecto hi litteratores, immo, ut verius dicam, tergiversatores, qui theologorum philosophorumque nomen falso sibi vendicant, aliud nihil suis in academiis, quam araneam texere solent, et suam ludentes operam et alienam. Quoniam horum quisque vafri illis ac superstitiosis tendiculis, quibus inter se viritim digladiantur, imperitorum auditorum animos aucupantes, primam gloriam ambit, pulchrumque iudicat digito demonstrari...*

<sup>1597</sup> *Prefazioni*, 9: *Quandoquidem frustra illis omnis esse librorum copia iuste videatur, qui plus chartas quam doctrinam videantur dilexisse; quod facile multis accidit, qui in scriniis domi habent maximam reclusam librorum et sapientiae supellectilem et foris apertam circumferunt ignorantiam. Quid enim prodest homini acervos librorum plenum esse, ignorantia scatere, curarum vanitatibus tumefieri, primis vix labris litteras ipsas degustare?*



achievements of Italian humanism at the Papal Court in the middle of the fifteenth century, Feld remarks that ‘the themes expounded in and about Rome by Lorenzo Valla, Leon Battista Alberti, Cardinal Bessarion and Niccolò Perotti achieved cosmopolitan stature in the work of Erasmus’ and other great sixteenth-century humanists. Although Feld’s analysis is perhaps too broad, I agree with his conclusion that between fifteenth-century humanists and the great humanists of Erasmus’ generation, we see a ‘drawn-out interplay of theme and variations’ in which ‘the basic rules...remained the same’.<sup>1598</sup>

Sometimes the paratexts of these editions remained the same. Ten years before the 1516 Ambrose edition, Leontorius, while at the same time serving as editor-in-chief for Johannes Amerbach’s 1506 Augustine edition,<sup>1599</sup> was also in charge of establishing the first version of the three-part index for Johannes Petri’s 1506 Ambrose edition. About 184 folio pages in length, the 1506 Ambrose edition’s index outdid in size even the 1516 Ambrose edition’s. The first volume’s colophon all but breathes out a sigh of relief: ‘The end. Thank God’.<sup>1600</sup> Leontorius introduced this index with a notice to the reader that Cratander copied almost word-for-word and prominently displayed it at the very beginning of the 1516 Ambrose edition’s first volume.<sup>1601</sup> In this notice Leontorius pointed out the index’s usefulness, which would ease the reader’s progress so much ‘that all other books [of Ambrose] will seem useless to you if this most convenient index is not added to them’.<sup>1602</sup> In his introductory letter to the 1506 Ambrose edition Leontorius praised Ambrose at noteworthy length, remarking that ‘it is most opportune and just that this holy man offer

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<sup>1598</sup> Maury Feld, ‘Variants of Humanism’, 10.

<sup>1599</sup> See AK 259, 17-23. See also AK 272, 9-11.

<sup>1600</sup> See page 765 in the MDL’s digitization of the 1506 Ambrose: *Finis. Deo Gratias*.

<sup>1601</sup> Unfortunately there is no pagination in the index (*repertorium*). For a comparison of these two letters see, however, page 570r of the 1506 Ambrose edition put online by the MDL and then look at the very beginning of the 1516 Ambrose edition for the letter beginning *Si tibi lector benivole*.

<sup>1602</sup> See 1506 Ambrose, f. 570r: *Ita tibi hoc repertorium inter legendum opera Ambrosiana subservitutum est, ut paene tibi inutiles reliqui omnes libri futuri essent, nisi hoc commodissimum inventarium esset adiunctum.*

himself as an example of virtue and doctrine to our times'.<sup>1603</sup> Leontorius finished his praise of Ambrose with the contention that all Christian readers could profit from Ambrose's works, putting forward the same ideas with which Erasmus closed his *Life of Jerome* ten years later:

There is no sex, no age, no state of life and no human condition that Ambrose left uncovered....This most holy Ambrose overlooked nothing that pertains to the formation and to the salvation of human life. There is no vice that he did not wound with the sword of hatred and rebuke, nor any virtue that he did not praise according to its worth.<sup>1604</sup>

We know now that this was common praise of Church Fathers at the time. Indeed, Leontorius took the above passage about Ambrose's universal appeal, as well as much other paratextual material, from John de Lapide's introductory letter to Amerbach's 1492 Ambrose edition.<sup>1605</sup>

About this time Leontorius was losing his eyesight and asked Johannes Amerbach to buy him glasses for one florin while at the Frankfurt book fair. Amerbach kindly obliged.<sup>1606</sup> Leontorius had enough to keep his eyes busy, for in addition to these considerable labours on Ambrose and on Augustine, it seems that he had also begun work on the 1516 Jerome *Edition* by autumn 1506 at the latest, when he wrote to Johannes Amerbach about a large edition of Jerome's works that Amerbach had sent to him.<sup>1607</sup> We are told that Johannes Amerbach had given the project to print Jerome's work his foremost attention after the printing of his 1506 Augustine edition, and during these years Leontorius' long-standing association with the

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<sup>1603</sup> See the *Epistola Proemialis* in the 1506 Ambrose. See 1516 Ambrose: Oportune revera et accomodate sanctus iste vir his nostris temporibus nomine suo virtutisque exemplo atque doctrina se offert.

<sup>1604</sup> 1516 Ambrose (introductory letter): Nullus sexus est, nulla aetas, nullus status, nulla denique hominum conditio, quam neglectam praeterierit...Nihil ab hoc sanctissimo Ambrosio quod ad humanae vitae informationem et salutem pertinet praetermissum est. Nullum vitium est quod ipse non detestationis ac reprehensionis gladio vulneraverit. Nec ulla virtus est quam non pro sua dignitate debitis laudibus extulerit.

<sup>1605</sup> See the second page of *Ad impressorem epistola* at the beginning of the 1492 Ambrose edition: Nullus sexus est, nulla aetas, nullus status, nulla denique hominum conditio, quam neglectam praeterierit...Nihil ab eo quod ad humanae vitae informationem et salutem pertinet praetermissum est. Nullum vitium est quod ipse non detestationis ac reprehensionis gladio vulneraverit. Nec ulla virtus est quam non pro sua dignitate debitis laudibus extulerit.

<sup>1606</sup> AK 352, 6-9. See AK 362.

<sup>1607</sup> See AK 319.

Amerbachs did not flag.<sup>1608</sup> In 1507, for example, Johannes Amerbach sent his son Boniface to live for a time with Leontorius at his monastery in Engenthal.<sup>1609</sup> In 1509 Leontorius wrote on many occasions, and at Amerbach's spurring, in order to try to convince scholars such as Reuchlin to undertake editorial work for the *Edition*.<sup>1610</sup> Also, we know that Leontorius' work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, including his letters, continued at least until 1512.<sup>1611</sup> Personal and professional connections between the printers, scholars and editors of contemporary Basel were considerable. From this brief overview of the printed tradition of Ambrose's works at Basel in comparison with two prior printed editions of Jerome's letters, we can conclude that in their Patristic scholarship and editing, Cratander and Leontorius shared many concerns with Lelli, Bussi and Brielis. Erasmus shared similar concerns, and he came to Basel when Leontorius had already edited several Patristic editions and the Bible, working for Johannes Amerbach and with scholars such as Reuchlin, the Amerbach brothers and others who later undertook important work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.

## ERASMUS' PATRISTIC EDITIONS

In his foreword to the 1527 Froben edition of Ambrose's works, Erasmus addressed many of the questions that we see in the forewords which Leontorius and Cratander wrote for their respective editions.<sup>1612</sup> Erasmus left to the reader's imagination his great efforts in 'the restoration of the text, collating the ancient copies, emending corrupt passages, restoring *lacunae*, removing interpolations' and 'replacing Greek words that were either missing

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<sup>1608</sup> To my knowledge, the first letter from Leontorius to John Amerbach in volume 1 of the AK is dated 22 April 1491, in which Leontorius complained about the textual corruption of a contemporary work called *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*. See AK 18, 25-30.

<sup>1609</sup> See Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 271.

<sup>1610</sup> See Vanautgaerden, *Typographe*, 271-272. See AK 425; AK 443.

<sup>1611</sup> AK 469, 105-13.

<sup>1612</sup> The introductory notes to CWE 1855 only make mention of the 1492 Ambrose edition and do not mention either the 1516 Ambrose edition or the 1506 Ambrose edition.

entirely or were added in forms that had no meaning'.<sup>1613</sup> Instead, he spent most of his foreword praising Ambrose, even setting him above Jerome and Augustine in some respects:

Among the ancient Doctors of the Church I think there is hardly anyone more worthy of being newly edited than Saint Ambrose. I should it to be known that this is said with all sincerity and without wishing to give offence to anyone. Jerome may be more expert in the knowledge of languages and the sacred Scriptures; Hilary may be possessed of a more polished style; Augustine may be more adroit in the resolving of knotty questions and others may excel in various other gifts. But whom can you cite who treats the sacred Scriptures with equal sincerity, who avoids suspect beliefs more prudently, who so conducts himself in all circumstances as a Christian bishop, who expresses such paternal sentiments, who was so adept at combining the supreme authority of a prelate with the utmost gentleness?<sup>1614</sup>

It is remarkable to note that Erasmus criticized Jerome in this foreword since it was clear to him that Jerome had considerable reservations about Ambrose and about his works. After mitigating somewhat Jerome's attitude towards Ambrose, Erasmus concluded:

It might be conjectured that, although there were certain things in the books of Ambrose that did not please Jerome, he preferred to pass them over in silence rather than make them public because of the remarkable prestige Ambrose enjoyed. Yet this fact does not detract in any way from the reputation of the sacred Doctor; Jerome too was a man, and nothing human is happy in all respects; and not all tastes are the same.<sup>1615</sup>

Later in this foreword Erasmus also defended Ambrose against Jerome's unkind comments about Ambrose's style. He remarked that Ambrose's style in debate was more pleasant and comely than the 'tragic emotion into which Jerome and Hilary sometimes break out'.<sup>1616</sup>

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<sup>1613</sup> Allen 1855, 33-37: Quantum autem sudoris exhaustum sit in hoc restituendo, dum collatione veterum codicum emendantur depravata, restituuntur amputata, resecantur assuta, reponuntur Graeca, quae vel aberant prorsus vel figuris nihil significantibus fuerant addita, tuae prudentiae fuerit aestimare.

<sup>1614</sup> Allen 1855, 18-29: Inter priscos autem Ecclesiae doctores Latinos, vix alium arbitror esse digniorem cuius extent integrae lucubrationes, quam divum Ambrosium. Hoc et ex animo dictum videri velim et citra cuiusquam contumeliam. Sit linguarum ac Scripturarum peritior Hieronymus, sit elaborationis phraseos Hilarius, sit in quaestionum nodis explicandis argutior Augustinus, aliis item dotibus excelsuerint alii: sed quem mihi dabis qui pari sinceritate tractet sacras literas, qui cautius vitarit suspecta dogmata, qui sic ubique Christianum episcopum, qui sic spiret paterna viscera, qui summam praesulis auctoritatem cum summa mansuetudine coniuxerit? Ubique sentias illum hoc affici quod loquitur, et adest dictioni modesta quaedam ac pia iucunditas grataque civilitas.

<sup>1615</sup> Allen 1855, 235-240: Ex quo divinare licet Hieronymo quaedam in Ambrosii libris displicuisse, quae ob singularem hominis auctoritatem suppressere maluerit quam evulgare. Nec ea res quicquam offitit gloriae sacri doctoris: nam et Hieronymus erat homo, et nihil est humanum ex omni parte beatum, nec eadem placent omnibus.

<sup>1616</sup> Allen 1855, 260-263: Sed habet interim suos aculeos, ubi res postulat; propius tamen accedens ad argutam iucunditatem quam ad δεινῶσιν illam et affectus paene tragicos, in quos interdum exardescit Hieronymus et Hilarius.

After a brief but compelling praise of Ambrose's Latin style, Erasmus observed about the current edition: 'if we have not provided a completely restored text of Ambrose, it is certainly a much less corrupt one.'<sup>1617</sup> In this foreword we see evidence of the greater prudence with which Erasmus wrote about his editing in later years. In 1516, Erasmus was still somewhat of a newcomer when it came to Patristic scholarship. By the end of 1527 however, he had already been in charge of Froben editions of the Church Fathers Cyprian (1520), Arnobius (1522), Hilarius (1523), Irenaeus (1526), Athanasius (1527) and Ambrose (1527).<sup>1618</sup>

From 1516 to his death, Erasmus helped to edit and to publish new editions of ten Church Fathers at the Froben press. In addition to the above editions, we find Erasmus' name on editions of Augustine (1529), John Chrysostom (1530), Basil (1532) and Origen, the latter of which appeared after his death in 1536. This is to say nothing of many smaller collections of Patristic writings published by Froben and by other printers throughout Europe. Taken together these efforts made Erasmus easily one of the most prolific Patristic editors in the first generations of printing – right on par with Bussi.<sup>1619</sup> Erasmus never helped to publish an edition of Gregory the Great's works with Froben, but in order to close this chapter I would like to look briefly at Erasmus' engagements to edit another of the four great Latin Doctors of the Church, Augustine.<sup>1620</sup> It took Erasmus at least seven years to finish his work for the 1529 Froben edition of Augustine's works, which was delayed by challenges ranging from the Reformation and ensuing wars and Froben's death to the machinations of organized labour. Froben had begun printing this edition in 1527 but died in the middle of the task, so it fell to his son Jerome to see through the printing of the ten-volume 1529 Augustine edition. In his

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<sup>1617</sup> Allen 1855, 294-295: Igitur Ambrosium si minus omni ex parte restitutum, certe multo minus depravatum dedimus.

<sup>1618</sup> Dill I, 74.

<sup>1619</sup> Dill I, 74.

<sup>1620</sup> The best and most up-to-date summary and analysis of Erasmus' efforts to edit Augustine's works is Visser, *Reading Augustine*, 29-45.

foreword to this edition Erasmus described in detail the challenges that had beset it, including a printers' strike at the worst possible moment, before the spring Frankfurt book-fair. 'A wicked conspiracy among the workmen prevented the appearance at the spring fair of my Augustine, which is now complete in ten large volumes', Erasmus wrote in a letter to John of Vergara in March 1529. Notwithstanding such problems, the new Augustine promised to be a handsome edition worthy of the great Doctor. 'The whole work is printed in large type', Erasmus wrote, 'which, as you know, was not the case with my Jerome'.<sup>1621</sup> In this edition's foreword dated May 1529 and dedicated to the Archbishop of Toledo, Alfonso de Fonseca, Erasmus praised Augustine in the highest terms after citing the virtues of many Church Fathers from East to West:

In Jerome we appreciate the rich storehouse of the Scriptures. We recognize in Gregory a genuine holiness, uncoloured by pretence. And not to go on at tedious length, all the others, through the benevolence of that same Spirit, have their own virtues, by which they commend themselves in their various ways to the affections of the pious. But I do not think there is another Doctor whom that rich and generous Spirit has endowed so abundantly with all his gifts as Augustine. It is as though he wanted to paint on a single canvas a picture of the model bishop, following Christ, the prince of bishops, complete with all the qualities which Peter and Paul demand of those who undertake to feed the Lord's flock.<sup>1622</sup>

Erasmus also praised the great efforts of Johannes Amerbach to publish Augustine's works in eleven ground-breaking volumes in 1506, a task so overwhelming and costly that others shied away from it:<sup>1623</sup>

Nothing deterred him [Amerbach] from making the whole of Augustine the common possession of all, not the huge expense, nor the perseverance needed in acquiring exemplars, nor the tedium of collation, nor the difficulty of the project, nor the hazards of the market. He was drawn, not by the love of profit,

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<sup>1621</sup> Allen 2133, 48-55: *Maliciosa quaedam operarum conspiratio fuit impedimento quo minus hoc verno mercatu prodierit Augustinus, decem magnis voluminibus absolutus; in quibus nihil est quod non maiusculis formulis sit excusum, id quod scis in Hieronymo non esse factum. Id malum nobis bene vertit. Non enim ausurus eram hunc laborem dicare Praesuli Toletano, nisi certior factus hoc illi fore non ingratum: nam esse scio nonnullos qui solent hoc genus officiis offendi.*

<sup>1622</sup> Allen 2157, 18-29: *In Hieronymo divitem Scripturarum penum optimo sanctimoniam agnoscimus. Ac, ne longum faciam, habet itidem suas, quibus sese piorum hominum affectibus varie commendant. At non arbitror alium esse doctorem in quem opulentus ille iuxta ac benignus Spiritus dotes suas omnes largius effuderit quam in Augustinum; quasi voluerit in una tabula vividum quoddam exemplar episcopi representare, omnibus virtutum numeris absolutum, quas post Christum episcoporum principem Paulus et Petrus requirunt in his qui pascendum Domini gregem susceperunt.*

<sup>1623</sup> For more information about Amerbach's engagement with Augustine see Visser, *Reading Augustine*, 13-27.

but by a genuine piety that breathes through all his prefaces, and by his desire to restore those ancient Doctors of the Church, who, it pained him to see, were almost forgotten. So I do not doubt that all who have advanced to a deeper faith through the works of Augustine bless the spirit of Amerbach. When he was working with even greater enthusiasm on the entire corpus of Jerome, God called him away to heaven. On his deathbed he handed that task over to his three sons, Bruno, Basilius and Boniface, whom, with this in mind, he had brought up educated in the three tongues. They carried out faithfully and zealously what their excellent father wished.<sup>1624</sup>

Erasmus criticized members of religious houses and clergymen who professed devotion to Augustine but had never bothered to put his works in a worthy form. Although ‘the publication of Augustine was rightfully their responsibility’, at the end of the day ‘a layman took it on of his own free will’.<sup>1625</sup> Nonetheless, Erasmus pointed out serious problems with the 1506 Amerbach edition. He chided his foes and rivals from whom ‘there has been no public criticism’ of this edition that had been available for many years, whereas ‘everyone has been finding fault with Jerome [the 1516 *Edition*]’. Erasmus then remarked that the 1506 Augustine edition swarmed with mistakes: ‘If I did not have a lot of witnesses who were either present at the printing or in charge of the work’, Erasmus noted, ‘no one would be likely to believe the multitude of mistakes I came across and removed, even in passages where no corruption was suspected’.<sup>1626</sup> In 1529 Erasmus seemed willing to extenuate and to forgive ‘errors caused by the carelessness of scribes and the ignorance of readers’. He charged with ‘sacrilege’, however, those that, when there was no error to correct or any need for change, wantonly and deliberately altered Augustine’s writings, ‘changing *que* to *et*, *et* to *que*, *sed* to *at*, *at* to *sed*, *dixit* to *ait*, *ait* to *dixit*, a verb to a participle, a participle to a verb,

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<sup>1624</sup> Allen 2157, 347-359: Primus hoc aegregium facinus ausus est vir singulari pietate Ioannes Amerbachius, re sat beatus, sed animi dotibus longe beator, quem nec sumptus immensi, nec in conquirendis undecunque exemplaribus instantia, nec in conferendis taedium, nec operis difficultas, nec distractionis alea, nec ulla res alia deterruit quo minus totum Augustinum redderet omnibus communem. Non huc invitavit virum quaestus amor; sed sincera pietas, quam omnes illius praefationes spirant, ac revocandi priscos illos Ecclesiae doctores studium quos videbat ac dolebat propemodum antiquatos. Proinde non dubito quin illius manibus bene precentur omnes qui per Augustini libros ad pietatem profecerunt. Idem in universas Hieronymi lucubrationes maiore etiam studio molientem Deus ad superos evocavit. Eam tamen provinciam tribus filiis, Brunoni, Basilio et Bonifacio, quos in hoc curarat trium peritia linguarum instituendos, moriens delegavit: per quos non minore studio quam fide peractum est quod optimus pater voluit.

<sup>1625</sup> Allen 2157, 378-379: Hic erat illorum proprius labor, quem homo laicus sua sponte suscepit.

<sup>1626</sup> Allen 2157, 372-379: Illud potius mirandum, quod cum Augustini lucubrationes tot iam annis versentur inter manus eruditorum, nulla extiterit de illo publica quaerimonia, quemadmodum de Hieronymo nemo non quaerebatur. Atqui ni multos haberem testes qui operi excudendo vel praefuerunt vel adfuerunt, nemo mihi crediturus sit quantum mendarum offenderim ac sustulerim, etiam illinc, ubi nihil esse depravatum putabatur.

and introducing many other similar changes'.<sup>1627</sup> Erasmus bemoaned the textual corruption that he later found in the 1506 Amerbach edition and in other copies, such as one at the Benedictine Abbey of Gembloux in Namur which was 'very old indeed' (*sane vetustum*):<sup>1628</sup>

I have found this shocking state of affairs everywhere, and especially in the work *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*). I have noticed it also while collating a copy that was made available to me by a monastery in Flanders – for the moment its name escapes me. It is a very beautiful and old exemplar – you have thought it would be reliable and authoritative. But there were scarcely two lines together that you would not want to cross out with the pen. We are not talking here about slips or the work of a sleepy copyist, but about the disrespectful tinkering of someone with too much time on his hands.<sup>1629</sup>

After citing at length examples of such corruption, Erasmus described his work to clean up the edition whose editing he felt obliged to undertake since Johannes Froben was determined to re-print Augustine. Erasmus believed that it would be terrible if 'such an outstanding Doctor of the Church came a second time upon the world's stage in an edition smothered with errors, whose deficiencies would be all the more glaring because the greater elegance of the printing and the magnificence of the volumes would draw all eyes to it – it would be like showing off fine purple soiled with filthy stains'.<sup>1630</sup> After describing his efforts to restore and to organize Augustine's works, Erasmus concluded: 'Nor would I have the nerve to

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<sup>1627</sup> Allen 2157, 387-397. See Allen 2157, 392-397: Illos vero quis absolvat a sacrilegii crimine, qui nec errore nec ulla necessitate, sed inepta libidine, studio mutarunt huius viri scripta? Vertentes 'que' in 'et'; 'et' in 'que'; 'sed' in 'at'; 'at' in 'sed'; 'dixit' in 'ait'; 'ait' in 'dixit'; verbum in participium; participium in verbum; aliaque innumera his consimilia, quasi luserint in opere alieno.

<sup>1628</sup> See CWE 15, page 233, note 39.

<sup>1629</sup> Allen 2157, 398-414: Hoc flagitium cum alias, tum praecipueprehendimus in libris *De Trinitate*. Prehendimus autem ex collatione codicis, quem nobis praebuit Flandriae monasterium quoddam, cuius nomen in praesentia non occurrit, sane bellum ac vetustum, dixisses bonae fidei magnaeque autoritatis exemplar. Vix unquam occurrebant duo versus quin esset quod iugularet transversus calamus. Hic non erat error aut oscitantia, sed impius ludus hominis male feriat. Alibi nescio quis sententias expleverat, adiectis verbis aliquot non necessariis: velut quoties beatus Augustinus citabat e Scripturis canonicis quantum ad id quod agebatur satis erat, ille Scripturae testimonium altius repetitum, ex eodem loco longius prosequabatur, cum nihil esset ad rem necesse. Id praecipue factum comperimus in Commentariis quos scripsit in Epistolam ad Romanos et ad Galatas. Risimus non paucis locis insignem scribarum delirationem, qui quod lector ineptiens annotarat in margine sui codicis, retulerant in contextum.

<sup>1630</sup> Allen 2157, 499-509: Quid multis? Cum nullus existeret qui vellet eam sarcinam in humeros tollere, et Ioannes Frobenius asseveraret stare sententiam ut, si non daretur aliud, totum Augustinum, qualis qualis erat, rursus excuderet; ego, partim amici respectu cui nihil pernegare valebam, sed multo magis inexpressibile piaculum esse reputans, si tam eximius Ecclesiae doctor, tot mendis obsitus, tantis impendiis denuo prodiret in orbis theatrum, hoc insigniore deformitate notabilis, quo magis elegantia formularum ac maiestate voluminum oculos omnium ad se rapturus esset, perinde quasi purpuram eximiam ostendas foedis maculis deformatam, passus sum imponi mihi clitellas.



guarantee that there is nothing left for a corrector to do. In some places the old codices failed me; sometimes in so long a work sleep crept over me, which Flaccus considers a pardonable weakness in human nature'.<sup>1631</sup> Erasmus noted that despite his best efforts, the reader must remember that he was not in charge of the actual printing, during which errors could easily steal into the edition: 'If an error has been caused by the carelessness of the workmen, that cannot be blamed on me, since I have no direct authority in the printing house. I can only provide instructions to those in charge of the business, which I did meticulously. Whatever my modest talents could accomplish, I carried out conscientiously'.<sup>1632</sup> Today also we would do well to keep in mind Erasmus' self-defence and the limitations of what one man could do in a complicated business operation. We should also remember that back in 1506 Johannes Amerbach, in his own foreword to his Augustine edition, had promised much of what Erasmus promised to readers twenty-three years later. According to Amerbach, his 1506 Augustine edition represented the end of three long years of 'great labours by which we most thoroughly and accurately corrected and cleansed' Augustine's works, put them in a new typeset and gave them a new order.<sup>1633</sup> Amerbach separated out apocryphal letters and asked readers to understand that if they were to come across anything 'less correct and little worthy of Augustine's genius, although this fault should first and foremost be chalked up to my ignorance and my barbarism, it is not all owing to this, but also to corrupted and most ancient exemplars that were almost all written everywhere in letters that were almost Gothic and

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<sup>1631</sup> Here Erasmus used a line that Bussi had already quoted in his foreword to the 1470 Roman edition of Jerome's letters. See Allen 2157, 571-575.

<sup>1632</sup> Allen 2157, 575-579: *Iam si quid operarum incuria commissum est, a nobis praestari non potuit, qui cum officina nihil habemus commercii. Tantum illos admonere possumus qui praesunt officinae; quod quidem a nobis factum est saedulo. Quicquid nostra mediocritas potuit, bona fide praestitit.* Erasmus again brought up his practice of leaving the text to printers in the foreword to Froben's 1523 edition of Cicero's *Tusculanae Disputationes*. See Allen 1390: *conferendorum exemplarium negotio famulis delegato, iudicandi parteis mihi sumpsit.* See Kenney, *Classical Text*, 51.

<sup>1633</sup> AK 294, 3-8: *Venimus (quod non sine ingentissimo gaudio dicimus), venimus ad finem iam ferme in tertium annum desideratissimum operum divi Augustini, eaque foeliciter a principio ad hunc usque finem laboribus maximis potissimum accuratissime emendando, expungendo et in hanc quam cernis, care lector, formam redigendo et ordinando exegimus et terminavimus.*

fading'. It could be worse still. 'For some of Augustine's works', Amerbach wrote, 'I was hardly able to get my hands on even one exemplar'.<sup>1634</sup> It was for this reason that Amerbach asked his sons Bruno and Basil to seek out printed editions of Augustine's works from Parisian booksellers.<sup>1635</sup>

The 1529 Augustine edition was but the culmination of Erasmus' long engagement to edit Augustine. We see the first printed fruits of these efforts some seven years before, in the 1522 Froben edition of *De civitate Dei*, whose chief editor was Juan Luis Vives but for which Erasmus also undertook considerable work. In his foreword to this edition Erasmus identified all the main issues that we have seen above: he complained about the poor state of prior editions and about the immense work required to set them right, he set out his editorial principles for establishing a better base text and for restoring Greek texts, and he described a new and better organization of Augustine's works.<sup>1636</sup> Already in 1522, Erasmus was aware of the 1506 Amerbach edition's shortcomings:

I too was convinced that there were fewer mistakes in Augustine's works than in Jerome's. But when I corrected a few books by way of experiment, the facts soon taught me that monstrous corruptions were commoner in this author than I had found them to be in Jerome or in Cyprian. For this, Augustine no doubt has to thank these exceptional admirers of his who alone understand him.<sup>1637</sup>

After explaining his efforts with Augustine's work and criticizing his contemporary critics, Erasmus turned to the reader with a modest appeal whose ideas he repeated later in his introduction to the 1529 Augustine edition: 'here is that admirable book, *De civitate Dei*,

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<sup>1634</sup> AK 294, 24-30: Praeterea, candide lector, si alicubi inter ea omnia quae expresse praemisimus offenderis aliquando sententiam minus emendatam minusque dignam Augustini ingenio, primum quidem mihi meaeque inscitiae et barbarismis deputari velim, non tamen omnino, sed etiam corruptis exemplaribus vetustissimis et paene gothicis litteris utcunque scriptis caducisque, quorum tamen non semper habere potui copiam, sed in aliquibus Augustini operibus vix tandem unum exemplar sum nactus.

<sup>1635</sup> AK 246, 69-74.

<sup>1636</sup> Allen 1309, 1-38.

<sup>1637</sup> Allen 1309, 74-79: Postremo, persuasum erat et mihi in Augustini libris minus esse mendarum quam in Hieronymianis. At dum tentandi gratia libros aliquot emendo, res ipsa me docuit plus esse prodigiosae depravationis in hoc autore quam compererim in Hieronymo aut Cypriano. Atque hoc nimirum debet Augustinus suis illis eximiis amatoribus, a quibus solis intelligitur.

more correct than it was before and with more learned explanatory notes – how much more, I would rather the reader discovered from the work itself than trust me alone.’<sup>1638</sup> Erasmus’ comments here were far more limited than what we see in the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, and even in the title-page to the 1522 Froben edition of the *De civitate Dei*, in which we read:

Now good reader you have the most absolute work of that most absolute doctor Aurelius Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, corrected with great labours and according to exemplars of the greatest and most venerable antiquity, by that most famous and in every way most learned man Juan Luis Vives Valentius. By the same men you will find Augustine illustrated with commentaries worthy of Saint Augustine himself, such that this great work, which was once in a most depraved state and contaminated most wretchedly by unlearned commentaries, now might seem to be entirely reborn.<sup>1639</sup>

Whoever wrote these words, their likeness to statements that we find in the 1516 Jerome *Edition* are striking and their claims to have ‘re-birthed’ Augustine contrasted with Erasmus’ more modest claims in his foreword to the 1522 *De civitate Dei*. Perhaps Erasmus’ attitudes about his own Patristic scholarship changed over the years between 1516 and 1522, or perhaps his position at the Froben press had changed and he was able to speak his mind more freely and to express reservations that would not have fit in with the publicity surrounding the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. But from this and from the above evidence I believe that we can agree with Dill’s thesis that at least in their underlying theories, Erasmus’ Patristic scholarship as well as that of other Froben editors was not especially original. Editorial theories do not always match editorial practice, however, and this was especially the case in Erasmus’ time, when the art of printing and of editing printed editions was one of those rare new things under the sun. In 1522 Froben may have promised readers that Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*

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<sup>1638</sup> Allen 1309, 117-120: Nunc interim prodit eximium opus *De civitate Dei*; quanto quam ante fuit castigatius quantoque doctioribus commentariis illustratum, malo te, lector, ex ipsa re discere quam ex nostro testimonio credere.

<sup>1639</sup> 1522 Augustine: Iohannes Frobenius Lectori salutem dicit. En habes optime lector absolutissimi doctoris Aurelii Augustini, opus absolutissimum, *De Civitate Dei*, magnis sudoribus emendatum ad priscae venerandaeque vetustatis exemplaria, per virum clarissimum et undequaque doctissimum Ioannem Lodovicum Vivem Valentium, et per eundem eruditissimis planeque divo Augustino dignis commentariis sic illustratum, ut opus hoc eximium, quod antehac et depravatissimum habebatur et indoctis commentariis miserabiliter contaminatum, nunc demum renatum videri possit. Fruere lector, ac fave tum illius non aestimandis vigiliis, tum nostrae industriae, cuius officina semper aliquid parit, maiore profecto fructu publicorum studiorum quam privato meo compendio, simulque agnosce, quantum etiam Theologia debeat bonis literis. Vale. Basileae ex officina nostra pridie Calendas Septembreis, Anno MDXXII.

had been ‘reborn’ through his edition, much as he had promised that same about Jerome’s works in 1516. What did this mean in practice? How did the text of these editions stack up with the texts of prior editions? There is only one way to answer these questions – we must go back to the sources.

## PART TWO: CHAPTER XII

### TEODORE LELLI'S *ARGUMENTA* AND THE 1508 SELESTAT SACCON

When Gregory Reisch began his correspondence with Erasmus in autumn 1514, he took it for granted that Erasmus had read Theodore Lelli's commentaries on Jerome's letters. As we have seen, in answer to a letter that Erasmus wrote shortly after his arrival at Basel in September 1514, Reisch politely tried to convince Erasmus not to do away with the new organization of Jerome's letters that he and Johannes Amerbach had made by overhauling Lelli's organization, apparently as they had found it in their copies of recent Kessler editions.<sup>1640</sup> This gentleman's disagreement aside, Reisch praised Erasmus' scholarship and welcomed with enthusiasm his many potential contributions to the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, including a replacement of Lelli's introductory commentaries to Jerome's letters with something more worthy of the Church Father. 'The old introductions (*argumenta vetera*) were not satisfactory', Reisch wrote, 'and you do very well to add new ones, as well as *scholia*'.<sup>1641</sup> In the first letter he sent to Reisch, Erasmus claimed that in his work on Jerome's letters he had 'supplied introductions (*argumenta*) to the individual letters and notes, so that only moderately good scholars may be able to read him without stumbling'.<sup>1642</sup> How quickly had Erasmus written these *argumenta*? He arrived in Basel at some point in the last two weeks of August 1514.<sup>1643</sup> Beatus claims in his biography of Erasmus that Erasmus finished his *scholia* only while in Basel in 1514, and had not even begun to write his *argumenta*

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<sup>1640</sup> Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 142. See especially note 20.

<sup>1641</sup> Allen 309, 21-22: *Argumenta vetera nunquam placuerunt; optime facis addendo alia, similiter et scholia.*

<sup>1642</sup> Allen 308, 24-26: *Addidimus argumenta in singulas et scholia, ut non admodum eruditi inoffensius eum possint legere.*

<sup>1643</sup> See Dill I, 167.

before his setting foot in the metropolis on the Rhine.<sup>1644</sup> Only a few weeks after his arrival, however, Erasmus already claimed to have added introductions (*addidimus argumenta*) in his letter to Reisch. Although it was probably not beyond Erasmus' abilities to pen introductions to most of Jerome's letters in a fortnight or so, from existing evidence we cannot be sure that Erasmus had begun writing his *argumenta* before or after his arrival at Basel.

Beyond doubt, however, is Erasmus' belief that his *argumenta* were an important contribution to the 1516 *Edition* and could help to make Jerome's writings more accessible to Christian readers, even to those whom he politely labelled 'moderately good scholars'. He repeated this idea in his 1515 press campaign letter to Cardinal Grimani, in which he noted that for Jerome's letters he had 'added summaries (*argumenta*), and also convenient notes in the right places, so that he can now be read without stumbling even by moderate scholars, although before (I speak boldly but it is the truth) even the most learned could not understand him'.<sup>1645</sup> In the 1516 *Edition*'s introductory letter, Erasmus highlighted the importance of his *argumenta*: 'I have added a summary (*argumentum*) to each treatise or letter, opening the door, as it were, to those who wish to enter.'<sup>1646</sup> These introductions were meant to compliment his *scholia*, whereby he might throw light 'on anything that might hold up a reader of modest attainments' and accomplish two further goals: 'first, to make such an eminent author, who hitherto could not be read even by men of great learning, accessible to those whose learning is but small, and second, that it may not be so easy in future for anyone to corrupt what other men have restored'.<sup>1647</sup> In other letters promoting the 1516 *Edition* and

<sup>1644</sup> See Dill I, 180. Beatus Rhenanus to Charles V included in Allen volume I, 64: 275–277.

<sup>1645</sup> The CWE translates *argumenta* as 'summaries', whereas in letter 308 the word *argumenta* is translated as 'introductions'. Allen 334, 107–110: *Addidimus cum argumentis commoda in loco scholia, quo possit vel a mediocriter eruditus inoffensius legi, qui antehac, dicam audacter sed vere, nec ab eruditissimis intelligebatur.*

<sup>1646</sup> Allen 396, 286–287: *Adiecimus singulis libellis aut epistolis argumenta, veluti fores aperientes ingredi volentibus.*

<sup>1647</sup> Allen 396, 286–293: *Deinde quando non omnibus contigit tot linguarum ac litterarum cognitio, si quid remorari poterat lectorem mediocriter eruditum, id scholiis additis illustravimus quae geminam utilitatem*

in the forewords to its nine volumes, we see more glowing praise of Erasmus' commentaries for Jerome's letters.<sup>1648</sup> Without digging further into the textual tradition, we could easily come away with the idea that prior printed editions not only had 'most depraved' texts, but included few if any commentaries meant to explain Jerome's letters to the reader.

Yet even though Erasmus did not mention them in the *Edition*, Lelli's *argumenta* to Jerome's letters, sometimes lengthier and more detailed than Erasmus', are impossible to overlook in any of the editions that included them.<sup>1649</sup> As Reisch did, we would probably not be too far off the mark to assume that in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries, most scholarly readers of editions of Jerome's letters including Lelli's *argumenta* would have read at least some of them along with the letters following them. When taken together, Erasmus' commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*, including but not limited to *argumenta*, to *scholia* (commentaries), to *antidoti* (justifications of Jerome's works) and to *censurae* (explanations of spurious letters), were far more extensive than Lelli's *argumenta*. To compare the two writers' efforts as commentators on the whole, therefore, is to compare *widely differing materials and results*. All the same, we may with good reason compare the *argumenta* that Lelli and Erasmus wrote for their respective editions of Jerome's letters. In his own comparison of these introductions, Pabel pointed out Erasmus' debt to Lelli:

Before editing Jerome, Erasmus had some limited experience writing *argumenta*. He produced detailed summaries of Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* for translations of these works that he published in 1506. Twenty years later... Erasmus published an edition of *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus

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adferant: alteram quod tam insignis author, qui antehac nec ab eruditissimis legi poterat, posthac a semidoctis poterit intelligi; alteram quod iam non perinde proclive fuerit cuius depravare quod ab aliis est restitutum.

<sup>1648</sup> See the introductory letter to volume 5 of the 1516 Jerome *Edition* attributed to Bruno and to Basil Amerbach, in 1516 *Edition* V, f. 1v (for whole text see AK 551, 1-26): Sed longe plurimum attulit Erasmus ille Roterodamus...Is quattuor primos tomos in se recepit, in quos addidit et scholia, ne post hac facile depravari possent...

<sup>1649</sup> In addition to the first three Rome editions (1468 Riessinger; 1468 and 1470 Sweynheim and Pannartz), there are, at least, the 1476 Rome (Pannartz and Lauer), 1476 Venice (Miscomini), 1480 Parma (unknown printer), 1488 Venice (Torresanus), 1489 Basel (Kessler), 1490 Venice (Benalius), 1492 Basel (Kessler), 1495 Nuremberg (Anton Koberger), 1496 Venice (Rubeus), 1496 Venice (Pinzi), 1497 Basel (Kessler), 1508 Lyon (Saccon), 1511-1512 Paris (Poncet le Preulx), 1512 Lyon (Saccon), 1518 Lyon (Saccon). See Dill I, 45-51; Lardet, in *Contra Rufinum*, 212-219.

of Lyon and supplied *argumenta* for the last four of the work's five books. The edition of Jerome represents his most sustained effort at introducing readers to individual texts, and here he belongs to the editorial tradition established by Lelli.<sup>1650</sup>

Pabel has shown that Lelli's commentaries had at least some roots and precedents in the manuscript tradition, and he has also described Lelli's familiarity with Patristic sources such as Gennadius, Augustine and Isidore of Seville. What is more, he has analyzed and compared the commentaries that Lelli and Erasmus wrote for specific letters and, judging from their similarities, reached the conclusion that 'while Erasmus was capable of analyzing Jerome's texts on his own and never reproduced statements of others for his *argumenta*, here and there we encounter some parallels with the *argumenta* in Lelli's editions'. Sometimes these 'textual similarities are striking'.<sup>1651</sup> My first goal in this chapter is to refine Pabel's discoveries through additional comparison. I shall show that like the Froben editors, Lelli tried to understand and to present the historical context of Jerome's letters. He was well versed in Patristic literature and drew from it for his commentaries, and he was capable of using this knowledge in order to determine the authenticity of Jerome's letters. While undertaking this analysis I shall also point out remarkable similarities between Erasmus' and Lelli's *argumenta* that confirm Pabel's thesis and might even point to a stronger link between them. I shall conclude this analysis, however, by showing an example of what distinguished these two editors of Jerome, since they often presented the letters of the Church Father in a different light. My second goal in this chapter is to show definitely what Dill and Husner have already suggested but have not proven: that Erasmus and the Froben editors used the copy of the 1508 Saccon edition now at the Humanist Library of Selestat (in this chapter I shall refer to this copy as the 1508 Selestat Saccon) in order to prepare the printed text for at

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<sup>1650</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 274-275.

<sup>1651</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 270-276.



least some of the letters in the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1652</sup> Armed with this knowledge we can turn to look at the 1516 *Edition* more closely and know that its text of many, if not most, of Jerome's letters was based on the 1508 Saccon edition's text, onto which the Froben editors grafted their changes.

Before moving forward we should understand how Lelli's commentaries were organized and presented. Lelli called his summaries of Jerome's letters *argumenta*, which is the same term that Erasmus later used in order to describe his own introductions to Jerome's letters written for the 1516 *Edition*. To these *argumenta* preceding every letter Lelli sometimes added a second and even a third *argumentum* (*aliud argumentum*), and Erasmus did the same in the *Edition* whenever he had thoughts and observations to add to his *argumenta*. For example, in Lelli's treatment of the letter *Audi filia* to Eustochium, Lelli's first *argumentum* is a general summary of *Audi filia*'s outstanding points and far lengthier than the 1516 *Edition*'s *argumentum* to the same letter.<sup>1653</sup> After having reviewed Jerome's many arguments about virginity's importance as well as his many recommendations about how to keep it, Lelli concluded by addressing the letter's other main concerns:

Putting together much evidence and many examples from the Scriptures he writes that one must reject greediness...He makes reference to the propertied monks in Egypt who were arrested on the advice of Macharius and buried, for the sake of terror, with their money. On which occasion he digresses in order to treat the three kinds of monks in Egypt: the Coenobites, the Anachorites and the Moabites, the latter of whom he condemns, because he says they most poorly followed the institutes of older days. He likewise treats the time for prayer, saintly fasting, the question of slanders and judgements and how to avoid the jealousy of wicked busybodies. Last he exhorts that one bear all difficult and bitter things for Christ, for to those who love him all difficult things will seem easy and short, and a little endurance will be rewarded with an unending prize.<sup>1654</sup>

<sup>1652</sup> The edition in question has the shelf-mark K 518 at the Humanist Library. In the appendix to this thesis I refer to the 1508 Selestat Saccon as K 518.

<sup>1653</sup> See Appendix XXIII-XXIV for these texts.

<sup>1654</sup> See Appendix XXIII-XXIV for 1508 Saccon, *argumentum* to *Audi filia*. Since the pages of the 1508 Selestat Saccon are not numbered, I shall cite each section by pointing out its location in the edition according to the organization of the 1508 Selestat Saccon edition. In this edition *Audi filia* is found in Part III, Tract V, Letter 16 (hereafter cited as 1508 Selestat Saccon p. III, t. V, l. 16): Plurima de scripturis testimonia atque exempla congerens quae doceant fugere avariciam, et historiam. Referens proprietarii monachi in aegypto deprehensi consilio Macharii ad terrorem cum nummis infosso. Qua occasione digrediens tractat de tribus generibus monachorum Aegypti: Coenobitarum, scilicet Anachoritarum, Moabitarum, et ipso postremo damnato, quod

Lelli's first *argumentum* to *Audi filia* is a more or less straightforward retelling of the letter's contents. When we look at Lelli's secondary summary, or *aliud argumentum*, and compare it with the 1516 *Edition*'s *argumentum* for the same letter, we can see more clearly the similarities between the two editions' commentaries. As Erasmus later did, Lelli brought up Rufinus' condemnation of *Audi filia* and cited for his evidence of this and of related events the *Dialogues* of Sulpicius Severus, Jerome's contemporary:<sup>1655</sup>

Note that this letter gave ammunition to Saint Jerome's detractors. For Rufinus in the second book that he wrote to Sempronius against Saint Jerome rails against him, stating that he had written a book about preserving virginity when he was at Rome. In the justification of virginity he defamed every rank and every profession with the filthiest rebukes. For even against the very virgins whom he seemed to be praising he wrote some harsh words in this letter, and likewise he lashed out filthily and shamefully against a certain kind of monks and also against deacons and priests. But if you look closely you will see that in these words there is no accusation of the good and of the modest, but rather criticisms of the wicked and the lustful.<sup>1656</sup>

Lelli praised Jerome's response to Rufinus' criticism by remarking, 'Jerome in answer elegantly defended himself from the charge'<sup>1657</sup> – one of only two places in his commentaries, according to Pabel, where Lelli brought up 'Jerome's elegant style'.<sup>1658</sup> Lelli then cited Severus as a witness in Jerome's defence:

What is more, Sulpicius Severus, Jerome's contemporary, wrote a dialogue called *On the Eastern Monks and Anchorites*, introducing Jerome's letter with these words: 'Five years ago I read one of [Jerome's] books about this matter, in which he most forcefully rails at and lays into all the kinds of our monks'. And a little later he writes: 'Nothing at all did [Jerome] leave out, that he did not attack and slice and uncover, especially greediness, but no less did he attack vanity. He had much to say against pride and not a few things about superstition. I confess that he seems to me to have painted the vices of

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dicit esse deterrimum priorum Instituta persequitur. De tempore quoque orationis, de sanctitate ieiunii, de detractatione et iudicio, ac aemulatione malignantium evitanda commonere facit. Ad extremum exhortans omnia vel dura vel aspera pro Christo perferre, quoniam amantibus illum facile videtur omne difficile, et brevis modicaque perpessio ineffabili praemio compensatur.

<sup>1655</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 272-273.

<sup>1656</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon (part III, t. V, l. 16), *argumentum* to *Audi filia*: Nota quae haec aepistola calumniae occasione praestituit detractoribus adversus beatum Hieronymum. Nam Ruffinus in secundo libro quem ad Sempronium contra eundem sanctum Hieronymum scribit impingit, dicens eum libellum quendam de conservanda virginitate romae positum descripsisse, in quo Christianorum ordinem omnem gradum omnemque professionem universam quoque foedissimis exprobrationibus infamaret ecclesiam. Nam ipsas virgines de quarum virtute scribere videbatur interferens quaedam ipsius aepistolae verba dicens etiam olim monachorum genus diaconos quoque et presbyteros foede et turpiter lacerasse, exponens verba ipsius epistolae. Caeterum si advertas in eis non contra bonos et modestos, sed malos et lascivos extat invectio.

<sup>1657</sup> 1508 Saccon (p. III, t. V, l. 16), *argumentum aliud* to *Audi filia*: Unde Hieronymus in responsione eleganter se purgat a crimine.

<sup>1658</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 272-273.

many others. Of the congress of virgins and monks and even other clerics he writes things as true as they are powerful. For which reason he is not loved by some whom I do not wish to name, but they are said to grumble when they see it written in this work, ‘a virgin spurns her chaste brother’ and other things.<sup>1659</sup>

In his *argumentum* to *Audi filia*, Erasmus also brought up Rufinus and Severus, but he did not cite by name Severus’ work, nor did he cite directly from it as Lelli did:

As is the duty of the good teacher, Jerome not only shows the form that one ought to follow but also the wiles and the wickedness of virgins, of monks and of clerics who serve their appetites and their greed under the guise of abstemiousness. In describing these he was a little more sharply satirical [*lusit*] than the dainty ears of some can bear. Elsewhere someone wrote that this book was stoned in Rome (for it was written there), and in his letter to Demetriade, Jerome says that many were offended by this letter. And Rufinus, among his other crimes, also blames this most holy man, because having professed a life of virginity, he exposed all the crimes of everyone else. Sulpicius Severus makes mention of this letter in some dialogue, but with praise.<sup>1660</sup>

Erasmus suggested, moreover, that Jerome’s foes had undertaken to corrupt the letter *Audi filia*. ‘I found it so full of mistakes,’ he wrote, ‘such that whenever the vice of one man was reproached, ten errors seem to have been introduced’.<sup>1661</sup> Erasmus’ *argumentum* to this letter is shorter and less detailed than Lelli’s. In no way did the latter’s introductory commentaries match the scope of the *scholia* and *antidotum* that Erasmus wrote for *Audi filia*, in which he explained many of the letter’s subtler points and historical details and mitigated what many

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<sup>1659</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon (p.III, t. V, l. 16), *argumentum aliud* to *Audi filia*: Sed et Severus Sulpicius Hieronymi coaeuus dialogum scribens de monachis et anachoritis orientalibus, de hac ipsa epistola quemdam introducit ita loquentem: ‘Ante hoc quinquenium cuiusdam illius rei libellum legi, in quo tota nostrarum natio monachorum ab eo vehementissime vexatur et capitur.’ Et post pauca: ‘Nihil inquit penitus omisit, quod non carperet laceraret exponere, praecipue avaritiam, nec minus vanitatem insectatus est. Multa de superbia, non pauca de superstitione disseruit. Vere fatebor mihi pinxisse videtur vitia multorum. Caeterum, de familiaritatibus virginium et monachorum atque etiam clericorum quam vera quam fortia disputavit. Unde et a quibusdam quos nominare nolo dicitur non amari, quin et fremere dicuntur, cum in illo opusculo scriptum legunt: ‘Coelibem spernit virgo germanum’ et caetera.

<sup>1660</sup> See Appendix XXIII for text of Erasmus’ *argumentum* to *Audi filia* (1516 *Edition* I, 60r): Eustochium ex omnibus Paulae liberis, perpetuam virginitatem est amplexa: solaque matri Bethlehem demigranti comes fuit. Sub huius igitur persona, quam apud Romanos primae nobilitatis fuit, virgines omnes docet, quo sit vivendum. Et sicut est boni praeceptoris officium, non solum indicat formam, quam oporteat sequi, verumetiam, prodit et aperit technas ac fucos virginum, monachorum et clericorum, qui sub pretextu castimoniae, ventri et avariciae serviebant. Lusit autem in his depingendis paulo liberius, quam delicatae quorundam aures ferre possent. Unum alibi scribit libellum hunc Romae (nam illic scripsit) fuisse lapidatum: et in epistola ad Demetriadem, indicat multos hoc offensos fuisse. Et Rufinus inter caetera crimina, hoc quoque viro sanctissimo impingit, quod institutionem virginis professus, omnium omnia crimina prodidisset. Meminit huius et Severus Sulpicius in dialogo quodam, sed cum laude.

<sup>1661</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, 60r: Adeo namque mendosum repperimus, ut pro unico vitio exprobrato, decem mendas induxisse videantur.

believed to be Jerome's excessively harsh words about marriage. Lelli's commentaries do show us, however, that he had carefully read Jerome's letters and tried to understand and to explain their historical background, as well as the theological and practical importance of Jerome's letters to his readers. Both editors wished to set the letter *Audi filia* in its historical context such that readers might better understand its content.

We see that Lelli was a close reader of many other Patristic sources in his *argumentum* to Jerome's letter to Paulinus, *Bonus homo*.<sup>1662</sup> Whereas Erasmus' *argumentum* for this letter is once again shorter than Lelli's *argumentum*, he gave his readers a full folio of *scholia* touching a wide range of matters relevant to the letter's text, from the usefulness of pilgrimages to praise of Jerome's ability to turn a phrase from Plautus to pious ends.<sup>1663</sup> In his *argumentum* and in his *scholia* to this letter, in order to set the letter in its historical context Erasmus brought up by name the same sources that we find in Lelli's *argumentum*. What is more, he used these sources in a way that makes us suspect the he had read it and used Lelli's *argumentum* in order to write his own, which reads thus:

Paulinus the young man, well-spoken and devout, as monks then were, praises Jerome in his letters along with others for what he did as an old man in the holy places. At the same time he sent a book that he wrote in defence of the Emperor Theodosius asking that Jerome tell him what life he would do best to lead. After praising him for his great eloquence, Jerome exhorts him to join to this knowledge of secret letters. This Paulinus, a relative of Paula if I am not mistaken, afterwards became the bishop of the city of Nola, as Gennadius witnesses. I think him different from the one who had been the bishop of Antiochene in Syria, as Jerome tells us in his epitaph to Marcella, whom he left behind along with Epiphanius when he was recalled to Rome, and remembered also in his epitaph for Paula.<sup>1664</sup>

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<sup>1662</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 270-275. According to Pabel, the fifth-century Church historian Gennadius was one of Lelli's favourite sources. See page 271.

<sup>1663</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, 45v-46r. See the *scholia* beginning *uno tantum die* and *qui aedere vult nucleum*.

<sup>1664</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, 45v: Paulinus luvenis, aeloquens et monachus, ut tum quidem erant monachi, Hieronymum litteris, cum aliis nominibus, tum his praecipue laudarat, quod senex in sanctis ageret locis. Miserat una librum, quem in defensionem Theodosii imperatoris scripserat: rogans, ut sibi praescriberet, quam vitae formam potissimum sequi deberet. Hunc igitur collaudatum, ob insignem aeloquentiam, hortatur, ut arcanarum litterarum scientiam adiungat. Hic Paulinus, Paulae ni fallor cognatus, postea Nolanae civitatis episcopus fuit: ut testatur Gennadius. Puto diversum ab eo, quem divus Hieronymus in epitaphio Marcellae, testatur Antiochenae in Syria episcopum fuisse, a quo Romam cum Epiphanio retractus est, cuius meminit et in epitaphio Paulae.

The only other comments that Erasmus had about this letter's historical context in his *scholia* are when two of them treat the 'panegyric' that Paulinus had supposedly written for the Emperor Theodosius. In the *scholion* beginning *Quo religiosissimus princeps*, Erasmus wrote that Paulinus 'indeed wrote a panegyric for the Emperor Theodosius, but before he was a bishop'.<sup>1665</sup> In a *scholion* beginning *Pro Theodosio* he writes of the same work: 'it seems that this was not so much a panegyric as it was an apologetic work against calumny.'<sup>1666</sup> When we turn to look at Lelli's *argumentum* to *Bonus homo*, we find the same information and more:

He praises a panegyric book that [Paulinus] had written for the prince Theodosius which showed much eloquence. Jerome exhorts him to season his knowledge with holy words through the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures... From here he takes the chance to treat certain writers and their works, saying that he would attain to the greatest heights if he were to take to the study of the Scriptures his wit and his eloquence. Saint Gregory in his book of dialogues shows what kind of man and of what holiness was this Paulinus, who afterwards became bishop of the city of Nola and who left behind other monuments of his genius, as Gennadius attests in his book of famous men, from which we have taken out the below excerpt.<sup>1667</sup>

After this Lelli cited at length the Church historian Gennadius' *De viris illustribus*:

Paulinus the Bishop of Nola in Campania: he wrote many things in short verses. To Celsus he wrote an epithalamium of life and a consolatory book on Christian death, uniting infant baptism with Christian hope. He likewise wrote several letters to Severus. To the Emperor Theodosius he wrote a panegyric before his bishophood, because he conquered tyrants more with faith and with prayer than by force of arms. He also wrote sacramentals and hymns. To his sister he likewise wrote many letters about the contempt of the world (*de contemptu mundi*) and he published different tracts owing to various reasons and disputes. Foremost among all his works were the books *De penitentia* (*On penitence*) and *De laude generali olim martyrum* (*On the general praise of the ancient martyrs*). He explained the times of

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<sup>1665</sup> See *scholion* to *Bonus homo* beginning *quo religiosissimus princeps* in 1516 *Edition I*, 45v: Scripsit enim panegyricum ad Theodosium imperatorem, sed nondum episcopus.

<sup>1666</sup> See *scholion* to *Bonus homo* beginning *Pro Theodosio* in 1516 *Edition I*, 45v: Apparet non tam panegyricum fuisse, quam Apologiam adversus calumnias. Id et superius significavit, cum ait: 'Illo ore, quo religiosissimus princeps defenditur.'

<sup>1667</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon (p. III, t. IX, l. 38): Commendat libellum panegyricum, quem pro Theodosio principe scripserat, efferens genus eloquii. Hortatur illum sacris sermonibus condiat scientiam Scripturarum scientiam ab eo qui habet clavem David censens esse quaerendam. Et inde occasione suscepta de quibusdam tractatoribus et eorum scriptis edisserit, illum dicens ad apicem perventurum si ingenio et eloquentiae scientia et studium accesserint scripturarum. [paragraph break] Qualis autem et cuius sanctitatis fuerit iste Paulinus, qui postea fuit Nolanae episcopus urbis, beatus Gregorius libro dialogorum ostendit, qui etiam aliqua sui ingenii monumenta reliquit, sicut Gennadius testatur libro virorum illustrium ex quo exceptum est subscriptum argumentum.

Honorius and of Valentinianus, not only observing the sanctity of their lives but no less their penitence against demons.<sup>1668</sup>

In his commentaries Lelli named and cited from sources that Erasmus either left out or cited only in passing in his commentaries to the letter *Bonus homo*. Sometimes more detailed than Erasmus' *argumenta* for the 1516 *Edition*, Lelli's *argumenta* consistently showed a command of Patristic literature, and explained characters and the subjects in Jerome's letters by making recourse to this literature and to other early Christian sources.

In his commentaries to the letter addressed to Demetriades, *Si summo ingenio*, Lelli showed that the authorship of many letters passed down through the manuscript tradition and included among Jerome's authentic works was questionable. In order to come to his conclusion Lelli analyzed the letter's style and also made inferences from historical sources and considerations. In the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus limited his introductory comments about this text to a short *censura* in which he praised the letter for its elegance, but then cited Augustine's suspicion that 'some Pelagian heretic' had probably written it.<sup>1669</sup> As in the rest of the 1516 *Edition*'s second volume, Erasmus wrote no *scholia* but only introductory *censurae* to letters that he deemed spurious. These *censurae* were often short and contained few details, such as the *censura* to *Si summo ingenio*:

This is a most learned and eloquent letter, but one that, if there were nothing else, the style clearly shows not to be a letter of Jerome. Moreover, it is not to be believed that Jerome wrote twice to the

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<sup>1668</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon (p. III, t. IX, l. 38): Paulinus Nolaie Campaniae episcopus composuit versu brevi, sed multa. Et ad Celsum quendam epithalamium vitae consolatorium libellum super morte christiani, et baptizati infantis spe christiana unitum. Et ad Serverum plures aepistolas. Ad Theodosum imperatorum ante episcopatum Panegyricum, cum super victoria tyrannorum eo maxime quo fide et oratione plus quam armis vicerit. Fecit et sacramentorum et hymnorum. Ad sororem quoque aepistulas multas de contemptu mundi dedit. Et de diversis causis disputationes diversas tractatus edidit. Praecipuus tamen omnium opusculorum eius est liber de poenitentia et de laude generali olim martyrum. Claruit temporibus Honorii et Valentiniani, non solum observatione et sanctitate vitae, sed et poenitentia adversum daemones.

<sup>1669</sup> See Augustine, Letter 188: 2, 4: Quomodo ergo a vobis, quibus tantam dilectionem debemus, admonendis ut talia caveatis, dissimulare possemus, cum legissemus librum, quem ad sanctam Demetriadem quisnam scripserit, vel utrum ad vos pervenerit, vestris potius rescriptis nosse volumus; in quo libro, si fas est, legat virgo Christi unde credat virginalem suam sanctitatem, omnesque spirituales divitias, nonnisi ex seipsa sibi esse; atque ita, priusquam sit plenissime beata, discat Deo esse, quod absit, ingrata.

same virgin about these things. Saint Augustine seems more than somewhat to suspect that this letter had been written by some Pelagian heretic, because in it there are some things that smack of Pelagian dogma, especially when Pelagius himself in some letter states that he wrote on the same subject to Demetriades. Bede thinks that this letter was written by Julian the heretic. The attribution of this letter to Saint Jerome arose from the mistake of others, because Jerome also wrote with similar arguments to the same virgin.<sup>1670</sup>

That Erasmus used Lelli's commentaries becomes even more likely when we look at Lelli's *argumentum aliud* to *Si summo ingenio*, in which we see most of the same arguments that Erasmus used in order to show its spuriousness. After summing up the letter's contents in his first *argumentum* that is much longer and more detailed than what we find in Erasmus' *censura*, in the ensuing *aliud argumentum* Lelli explained:

Take note that this letter is said not to be Jerome's by many people, but rather the letter of some Pelagian, because he preaches too much the good of nature and of free will. Bede the presbyter says that this letter was written by Julian, a follower of this heresy, in the book called *De gratia Dei* against the same Julian. We know that many things in this letter were condemned by Augustine as contrary to the law of grace. Wherefore it is thought that this letter was written by some Pelagian, as Pelagius himself wrote a letter to Juliana the mother of Demetriades. Nonetheless we included this letter since it puts forward several salutary warnings and in texts it is commonly ascribed to Jerome. On this account we too included this letter.<sup>1671</sup>

Almost all the arguments that Erasmus put forward in his *censura* to this letter had already been put forward in Lelli's commentaries, and once again at greater detail than in the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. Lelli cited by name Augustine's *De gratia Dei* (*On the Grace of God*) as a source, to which Erasmus only alluded in his *censura*. The next letter according to Lelli's organization of Jerome's letters, as in the 1516 *Edition*'s second volume, was not actually Jerome's. Rather, it was Augustine's letter to Juliana, the mother of Demetriade, whose

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<sup>1670</sup> 1516 *Edition* II, 4v: Erudita prorsus et aeloquens epistola, sed quam, ut nihil aliud accedat, vel stilus palam arguat non esse Hieronymi. Praeterea consentaneum non est, Hieronymum ad eandem virginem iisdem de rebus bis scripsisse. Divus Augustinus non nihil suspicari videtur ab haeretico Pelagiano conscriptam, quod insint in ea nonnulla, quae Pelagianorum dogmata resipiant, praesertim, cum is Pelagius in epistola quadam testetur sese ad Demetriadem scripsisse. Beda putat esse Iuliani haeretici. Caeterum error inscriptionis hinc natus est, quod Hieronymus quoque scripserit ad hanc virginem argumento non dissimili.

<sup>1671</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon (p. III, t. IV, l. 18) *argumentum*: Nota quod a plerisque haec epistola dicitur non esse hieronymi, sed alicuius pelagianistae, eo quo nimis bonum naturae et liberum prodicet arbitrium. Beda presbyter dicit eam esse Iuliani eius haeresis sectatoris in libro de gratia dei contra eundem Iulianum. Nos pleraque huius epistolae ab Augustino novimus esse reprehensa tamquam gratiae dei adversantia. Unde et suspicatur illam a Pelagiano esse perscriptam, sicut ipse scribit in epistula ad Iulianum Demetriadis matrem. Quam ob hoc ipsi libello subdidimus. Continet tamen multa salutaria monita, et communiter in exemplaribus sub nomine Hieronymi habetur inserta. Ideoque et nos illam inscripsimus.

salutation begins with the words *Dominae debetis in Christo*.<sup>1672</sup> In his introduction to this letter Lelli explained that this letter contained information needed in order properly to understand *Si summo ingenio*. Whereas Erasmus gave his readers no commentary about *Dominae debetis in Christo*, which he had included among spurious works in the 1516 *Edition*'s second volume,<sup>1673</sup> Lelli explained the reasons for which he included this spurious letter in his *argumentum*:

This is the letter of Saint Augustine to Juliana the mother of the virgin Demetriades about the foregoing booklet written to Demetriades, wherein he attacks this man who goes so much against the grace of God and ascribed the good of virginity to the choice of nature or to free will and condemns many words of this same book, introducing points and arguing. He thinks that this book was written to the virgin by some Pelagian. This letter, moreover, we have added as a kind of antidote to this poison and mostly so that we might clear Saint Jerome from the slander of heresy.<sup>1674</sup>

Lelli's work to identify spurious letters did not approach the scale of Erasmus' effort to point out spurious letters with *censurae* and definitely to separate them from Jerome's authentic works by quarantining them in the 1516 *Edition*'s second volume. Nonetheless, Lelli was able to make judgements based on style and on knowledge of Church history drawn from Patristic sources in order to determine that *Si summo ingenio* had been falsely ascribed to Jerome. Therefore, 'style was not the only criterion' on which Lelli based his judgements about the authenticity of Jerome's letters.<sup>1675</sup> Lelli also understood that Jerome was widely criticized in his lifetime and wished to defend Jerome from his critics both past and present.<sup>1676</sup> In the above case and in many others, when we keep in mind the speed at which

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<sup>1672</sup> This is now commonly catalogued as Augustine, Letter 188.

<sup>1673</sup> 1516 *Edition* II, 12v.

<sup>1674</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon (p. III, t. IV, l. 19) *argumentum*: Epistola beati Augustini ad Iulianam Demetriadis virginis matrem de priori libello ad Demetriadem scripto, ubi illum tamque gratiae dei adversantem, et bonum virginalis sanctitatis naturae et libero arbitrio attribuentem carpit, et damnat quaedam ipsius libelli verba, inserens et arguens. Quem librum ipse suspicatur a Pelagio scriptum ad virginem. Hanc autem aepistolam velut antidotum quoddam ad venenum ipsi libello subiecimus, maxime ut beatum Hieronymum haeresis calumnia purgaremus.

<sup>1675</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 159. See pages 149-170 for more discussion about the efforts of pre-*Erasmian* editors of Jerome to determine his letters' authenticity.

<sup>1676</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 272-273. See Lelli's introduction to Rufinus' letter against Jerome, included in 1508 Saccon (p. I, t. III, l. 35): *Argumentum in libros invectivos Ruffini Aquinlegiensis. Ruffinus ex Apologia ad Pammachium* (ut verius arbitror) ex accusatione publica graviori stimulo agitatus invehit in beatum



Erasmus may have written his *argumenta* as well as the undoubted pressures of many simultaneous projects at Froben's 'treadmill' (*pistrinum*),<sup>1677</sup> it seems to me possible that Erasmus quite simply lifted the material for his *censura* found at the letter beginning *Si summo ingenio* directly from a copy of the 1508 Saccon edition or from another edition containing Lelli's commentaries. To do so would have been in keeping with the practice of other editors of the Church Fathers then working at Basel, such as Leontorius and Cratander, both of whom did not hesitate to re-use past editors' paratextual commentaries and catalogues.

As important as it is to understand the continuities between their *argumenta*, we should not overstate Lelli's importance to Erasmus, whose *argumenta* are often far more detailed and polemically charged. Lelli's *argumentum* to Jerome's letter *Quanto studio et amore*,<sup>1678</sup> for example, put forward only a short description of the letter's contents and purpose, and he seemed to accept without question Jerome's arguments:

This is the beginning of Jerome's exhortatory letter to Heliodorus, not yet a bishop, in which he encourages Heliodorus to leave behind his home, his family and his riches and to go out to the desert to fight for God. Jerome describes the dangers that living in cities poses to God's servants and exposes the temptations of the devil. He also seeks to quell any desire to become a priest and a bishop, expounding upon the dangers of these states and ranking the wilderness and solitude above them. He finishes by describing the Last Judgement.<sup>1679</sup>

Far different was Erasmus' presentation of this letter in his commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*. In his *argumentum* Erasmus also remarked that Jerome called this letter

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Hieronymum hoc primo libello fidem suam de carnis resurrectione contestans, magis Hieronymum in eo ipso suis commentariis errasse dicens, et suae interpretationis causas iustissimas astruens, quae non gloriae cupidus sed dei timore ecclesiae per futura traduxerit.

<sup>1677</sup> Allen 331, 6.

<sup>1678</sup> The first words of this letter are often reversed. We find it as *Quanto studio et amore* in some editions, but in the 1508 Saccon (p. III, t. VIII, l. 27) it begins *Quanto amore et studio*. In this thesis I shall cite this letter as *Quanto studio et amore*.

<sup>1679</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon (p. III, t. VIII, l. 27); see Appendix VIII for a transcription: Incipit epistola beati Hieronymi ad Heliodorum nondum episcopum exhortatoria, qua illum hortatur, ut domo, cognatis divitiisque relictis, ad eremum Deo militaturus accedat, pericula habitationis in urbibus servis Dei et daemonum tentamenta describens. Ubi etiam ambitum reprimit sacerdotii ac episcopatus, de periculo illius status edisserens, et eremum ac solitudinem efferens, ad extremum futurum iudicium representans.

‘exhortatory’ in his *Catalogus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum* (*Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*), but he then used this qualifying adjective in order to bolster his case against taking this letter at its word. Erasmus pointed out that Jerome had written this letter ‘as a young man and almost a boy...inflamed with the study of rhetoric’ who, ‘according to the custom of the age, was playing in his youth like a schoolboy’.<sup>1680</sup> Already in his *argumentum*, Erasmus cast doubt on how seriously readers should take this letter, noting that in Jerome’s rhetoric in *Quanto studio et amore* ‘you recognize the work of a novice, but nonetheless a novice of the greatest promise’.<sup>1681</sup> For this letter Erasmus divided his *scholia* into two sections that each covers almost two folio pages. After his first *argumentum* we find one set of *scholia* that explained the text in the same way as other *scholia* in the *Edition*. After about two folio pages of *scholia*, we then come to a separate commentary, the *artis annotatio*, after which we find another two folio pages of *scholia* that mostly analyzed Jerome’s style.<sup>1682</sup> At the end of this second set of *scholia* we find Erasmus’ *antidotus adversus calumniam* (‘antidote against calumny’).<sup>1683</sup> In both the *artis annotatio* and the *antidotus* Erasmus again questioned the seriousness of this letter. In the *artis annotatio* Erasmus remarked that years later Jerome himself confessed that in the letter *Quanto studio et amore* he had ‘played with little flowers of rhetoric’.<sup>1684</sup> In his ‘antidote’ that followed, Erasmus emphasized that one should not take to heart Jerome’s many powerful exhortations against owning any property in this letter, ‘in

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<sup>1680</sup> 1516 *Edition* I (introduction to *Quanto studio et amore*), f. 2v: Deinde velut in peroratione, eremiticae vitae felicitatem decantat, ac supremi iudicii terrorem ob oculos ponit. Huius epistolae nominatim mentionem facit in *Catalogo* operum suorum, et exhortatoriam vocat. Scripsit autem admodum adolescens ac pene puer, quemadmodum in proxima testatur epistola, illud addens, sese in hac calentibus adhuc rhetorum studiis, pro illius aetatis ratione, scholastico flore luisse. Proinde scatet metaphoris, allegoriis, etiam fabulosis, epiphonematis, dilemmatis, ac reliquis id genus orationis ornamentis.

<sup>1681</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, f. 2v: Conatus artis eiusmodi est, ut tyronem, sed summae spei tyronem possis agnoscere

<sup>1682</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, ff. 2v-5r.

<sup>1683</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, f. 5r;

<sup>1684</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, ff. 3v-4r (*Artis annotatio*). See also Appendix X-XI for a transcription: Coeterum quando divus Hieronymus in proxima epistola fatetur in hac se rhetorum flosculis luisse, fortasse non alienum fuerit artis quoque rationem, quam secutus est indicare, sed paucis, neque nimis anxie, ne duo pariter incommoda nos sequantur, ut et molesti simus lectori, et salubribus huius viri praeceptis pondus ac fidem detrahamus.

which the young man was playing rather than writing, as he himself later testified'.<sup>1685</sup> Erasmus recommended instead that Christians follow Saint Paul's exhortation about worldly wealth and 'own things as though they do not own them'. After all, Erasmus asked, if we were to take seriously Jerome's claims that it was all but impossible to escape damnation without giving away all one's possessions and fleeing to the desert, 'what would we say then of so many great bishops, whose riches compare with that of kings? What of other most wealthy Christians, each of whom likes to be called Christ's disciple?'<sup>1686</sup> To my knowledge we do not find anything resembling such pointed commentary and interpretation in Lelli's *argumenta*.

*Quanto studio et amore* was the first letter included in the 1516 *Edition*'s first volume and therefore positioned to be one of the first works in the whole *Edition* that contemporary readers would have encountered. For this reason it is understandable that Erasmus gave special attention to his commentaries on this letter. Erasmus did not interpret all of Jerome's letters in such detail and with such a polemical edge, but we do find a good many other *argumenta* in the 1516 Jerome *Edition* whose interpretations match the scope and the rhetorical force of Erasmus' commentaries for the letter *Quanto studio et amore*. In the *argumentum* on Jerome's letter to Domnio *Litterae tuae*, for example, Erasmus noted that 'this whole letter, from head to toe, is in jest', and in this thesis' first part we have already seen Erasmus' similar observations about Jerome's letter *Saepe a me*.<sup>1687</sup> Whereas Lelli's *argumenta* were by and large uncritical summaries of 'the facts' of Jerome's letters, Erasmus

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<sup>1685</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, 5r (*antidotus adversus calumniam*); Appendix XI-XII: Igitur in hac epistola, quam adolescens luserit magis quam scripserit, sicut ipse testatur, non oportet ad vivum exigere, si quid exhortandi causa scripsit vaehementius, velut illud, quod ab omnibus Christianis videtur exigere paupertatem, cum ait: 'Animadvertite frater, non licet tibi quicquam habere re rebus tuis.'

<sup>1686</sup> 1516 *Edition* I, 5r; Appendix XII: Postremo qui iuxta Paulum sic possidet, quasi non possideat. Alioqui quid dicemus de tot egregiis episcopis, qui vel cum regibus certare possint opulentia? Quid de caeteris Christianis ditissimis, quorum nemo non gaudet Christi vocari discipulus? Quid enim aliud est esse Christi discipulum, quam esse Christianum?

<sup>1687</sup> 1516 *Edition* III, 51v: Est autem tota iocosa epistola, a capite usque ad calcem.

often tried to explain his own interpretation of Jerome's meaning and intent by setting them in an historical and a linguistic context. Such pointed introductions may have sparked negative reactions,<sup>1688</sup> but they also won Erasmus praise from men like Guillaume Budé, who recounted to Cuthbert Tunstall in 1517 that after he had seen what Erasmus had done 'for Saint Jerome's...works, with his immense labours of elucidation and explanation, of setting in order and renewing and virtually resurrecting, then I feel how fortunate is this age of ours, and our successors, to have that sacred body of doctrine...rightly and duly ordered and indeed restored to us'.<sup>1689</sup>

Erasmus did not invent his commentaries out of thin air. He had read Lelli's *argumenta* and he used them to some extent in the composition of his own, which made up an important part of his 'elucidation and explanation' of Jerome and of his letters so prized by many contemporary readers such as Budé. Erasmus went much further, however, than did Lelli or any other known commentator on Jerome's letters. In this he did, at last, fulfil 'the burning desire' that he had expressed years earlier 'to write a commentary on the letters of Jerome', something 'never before attempted by anyone'.<sup>1690</sup> In the broader context of Renaissance editing, he brought to Jerome what others had brought to the pagan Classics.<sup>1691</sup> Anthony Grafton has asserted in *The Classical Tradition* that the 'middle and later decades of the fifteenth century...became an age of commentary', and he emphasizes both the continuity of the commentary tradition and how fashionable commentaries became among

<sup>1688</sup> See Allen 2157, 372-379. See also Allen 843, 544-574. For Rummel's discussion of this passage see Erika Rummel, *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics: 1515-1522* (Leiden: Nieuwkoop de Graaf Publishers, 1989), 116.

<sup>1689</sup> Allen 583, 225-231: Rursus quam ea lego quae in Novum Instrumentum religionis rectae ac pietatis aedidit, quaeque in divi Hieronymi libris (quo uno ferme interprete iuris divini prudentia nititur) immenso labore explicuit, enarravit, digessit, interpolavit et plane instauravit, ibi sacrosanctam disciplinam, qua vivendi moriendique ratio nobis constat, recte atque ordine constitutam, atque etiam restitutam, aetati huic nostrae posterisque gratulor.

<sup>1690</sup> Allen 141, 16-19: Flagrat iam olim mihi incredibili ardore animus Hieronymianas epistolas commentariis illustrandi, et nescio quis deus mihi pectus accendit agitque ut rem tantam et a nullo hactenus tentatam audeam animo concipere.

<sup>1691</sup> See Julia Haig Gaisser, *The Fortunes of Apuleius and the Golden Ass* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 199-201.

humanists.<sup>1692</sup> These included works as different as the Mediaeval exegete Nicholas of Lyra's widely-printed commentary on the Bible, the *Postilla*, Valla's *Annotations*, Poliziano's *Miscellanea* and Filippo Beroaldo's commentaries on Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, all of which Erasmus cited at one place or another in the 1516 Jerome *Edition* or in the 1516 Froben *New Testament*. To my knowledge, however, before Erasmus' work for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, no one had yet written such a detailed commentary on the works of a Church Father. It is also remarkable how in his *scholia*, which to my mind closely resemble Beroaldo's commentaries on *The Golden Ass*, Erasmus tried 'to explicate ancient texts and to show their direct relevance to modern political and moral questions'.<sup>1693</sup> Erasmus was among those contemporaries most responsible for bringing humanist enthusiasm for learned commentary to the Church Fathers, an effort that Beatus continued with his commentaries on Tertullian. For Erasmus, as we have seen, such efforts were a practical necessity as well as a scholarly imperative, needed to preserve the texts from corruption and to make them accessible to a broader Christian public.<sup>1694</sup>

### THE 1508 SELESTAT SACCON

'Do they suppose that I have corrected Jerome from any source other than very ancient copies, which might well be thought to have been written in the age of Jerome himself, should any such thing exist?'<sup>1695</sup> Erasmus made this claim in a letter dated 7 May 1518 and addressed to Martin Lypsius, in which he undertook to answer supposed critics of the 1516 Jerome *Edition* and especially of the 1516 *New Testament*, most notably Edward Lee. 'And even so', Erasmus continued, 'I have not been satisfied with single copies. In this

<sup>1692</sup> See Anthony Grafton in *Classical Tradition*, 229-230. See pages 225-233 for the entry on 'commentary'.

<sup>1693</sup> Grafton in *Classical Tradition*, 230

<sup>1694</sup> See, for example, his introduction to the 1516 Jerome *Edition* in Allen 396, 286-293.

<sup>1695</sup> Allen 843, 567-569: Tum an aliunde credunt nos emendasse Hieronymum quam ex vetustissimis exemplaribus, quae vel ipso Hieronymi saeculo scripta videri poterant, si ullum extaret...?

department at least very good scholars have done more work that might be thought possible'.<sup>1696</sup> Erasmus was guilty of no small exaggeration when he claimed to have corrected Jerome only from 'very ancient copies'. In the two chapters below we shall see that it is far more likely that he made a great many, if not most, of his corrections for the 1516 *Edition* by reading and by comparing prior printed editions, as was common editorial practice at the time. It is sure, at least, that he did so for some texts such as Rufinus' *Expositio Symboli* (*Exposition of the Creed*). Included in the 1516 *Edition*'s second volume,<sup>1697</sup> the text of this work repeated mistakes distinctive to the 1468 and 1470 Roman (Sweynheim and Pannartz) editions.<sup>1698</sup> Husner believed that, whatever their promises, Erasmus and the other Froben editors only used manuscripts in limited cases in their work for the 1516 *Edition*, and hardly at all for Jerome's letters.<sup>1699</sup> Erasmus' unmeasured response in the above letter raises other questions important for our understanding of the 1516 *Edition*'s creation. To what exactly was Erasmus referring when he wrote of using 'very ancient copies' (*vetustissimis exemplaribus*)? Were these manuscripts or printed editions? Who were these 'very good scholars' and what had they accomplished before Erasmus? Were they actually the Froben editors or instead the editors of prior printed editions of Jerome's letters that Erasmus used? Although existing evidence does not, to my knowledge, allow for definitive answers to any of these questions, I shall try to shed some light on them while showing that Erasmus and the Froben editors used the 1508 Saccon edition and, more specifically, the 1508 Saccon edition at Selestat (referenced hereafter as the '1508 Selestat Seccon K 518') in order to prepare at least some of their base-text of Jerome's letters for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.

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<sup>1696</sup> Allen 843, 569-571: ...neque tamen contenti unis exemplaribus. Hac sane in parte a doctissimis viris plusquam credi possit sudatum est.

<sup>1697</sup> See 1516 *Edition* II, ff. 59-68.

<sup>1698</sup> See A. C. De La Mare and Lotte Hellinga, 'The First Book Printed in Oxford: The *Expositio Symboli* of Rufinus', in *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 7 (1978): 237.

<sup>1699</sup> Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 142.

Since he was so familiar with Lelli's commentaries, Erasmus could have known them from working with any number of prior editions, including the 1497 Kessler edition and the 1508 Saccon edition. Dill believes it possible that Erasmus owned the former edition when he announced his project to edit Jerome in the early 1500s.<sup>1700</sup> He also believes that Erasmus took a copy of the 1508 Saccon edition with him to Cambridge and used it as the working-copy (*Handexemplar*) for what eventually became his commentaries for the 1516 *Edition*.<sup>1701</sup> The investigations of Fritz Husner, Pierre Lardet, Lotte Hellinga and Albinia Catherine de la Mare have shown that the Froben editors used the 1508 Saccon edition as a *Druckvorlage* for many texts in the 1516 *Edition*.<sup>1702</sup> Drawing from these works, Dill proposes that the Froben editors used three copies of the 1508 Saccon edition in order to establish the base-text for the 1516 *Edition*: one belonging to Erasmus and with which he worked (a *Handexemplar*), a second printer's copy (*Druckvorlage*) belonging to the typesetters and which was likely destroyed in the printing process<sup>1703</sup> and a third which belonged to Beatus – the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518).<sup>1704</sup> To our knowledge, only the last copy survives today. Beatus and other contemporary readers and editors filled its pages with annotations and marks both in red and in black ink. It is clear that Beatus and other contemporary readers used the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) as a source of Jerome's letters and writings, and its pages show far more evidence of use than does, for instance, Beatus' copy of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. From my review, almost every page of the first part of Jerome's letters in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) included corrections, marginal notes and punctuation marks written in contemporary hands in black and in red ink, and we find the same in about half of the pages in the second part of the copy. In the third part of the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), however, we find

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<sup>1700</sup> Dill I, 85-86.

<sup>1701</sup> Dill I, 169-170.

<sup>1702</sup> Dill I, 170. See Lardet, in *Contra Rufinum*, 198-234. See especially pages 226-227; 234.

<sup>1703</sup> According to Kenney, 'not even venerable manuscripts were exempt from use as printer's copy'. See Kenney, *Classical Text*, 82-83.

<sup>1704</sup> Dill I, 170-171.

corrections, marginal notes and punctuation marks only in the first sixteen ‘chapters’ of Jerome’s supposed ‘monastic rule’ beginning *Fratres carissimi*, relegated to the second volume’s ‘unlearned’ (*indocta*) *spuria* in the 1516 *Edition*.<sup>1705</sup> In order to investigate Dill’s hypothesis, in late summer 2012 I undertook a detailed collation of Beatus’ copy of the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) with his copy of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, comparing mostly the letters that Erasmus cited in his *Life of Jerome*. In the appendix to this thesis I have described in detail my findings from this collation. Below we shall briefly look at how my analysis shows that the Froben editors used the 1508 Saccon edition and, more specifically, Beatus Rhenanus’ copy of the 1508 Saccon edition now at Selestat’s *Bibliothèque Humaniste* – the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) – in order to prepare the 1516 *Edition*. However and whenever Beatus acquired his copy of the 1508 Saccon edition, it seems likely to me that other editors and correctors working for the 1516 *Edition* made at least some of the corrections written in the margins and text of the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518).

I do not wish to repeat myself needlessly, but before continuing I think it necessary to describe clearly the sources on which I shall be basing this chapter’s conclusions. Firstly, I shall be presenting the printed text of the 1508 Saccon edition. Second, I shall be presenting the corrections and marginal notes made in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), Beatus Rhenanus’ copy of the 1508 Saccon edition. Third, I shall be presenting the printed text of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. In order to avoid confusion, I shall mark all these texts clearly and fully whenever I treat them.

Although the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) has lost some of its pages over the five hundred years since its printing, its first surviving page features Albrecht Dürer’s 1492

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<sup>1705</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon (p. III, t. IX, l. 41). This letter begins in 1516 *Edition* II, f. 163v.



engraving of *Saint Jerome in His Study*.<sup>1706</sup> On the verso side of this page we find Lelli's introductory notice to the reader, and this text is followed by ten complete folio pages comprising an alphabetical index of important subjects in Jerome's letters and where these can be found. This index is similar to the one that we find in Johannes Petri's 1506 Ambrose edition in its organization, its presentation and its purpose. After this table we find the table of contents of the first part of this edition. Likewise, part two and part three each has alphabetic indexes of contents followed by the table of contents for Jerome's letters in that part. The first part of the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) is followed by a sizeable poem in Sapphic strophes that 'narrates what kind of life Saint Jerome led in the desert'.<sup>1707</sup> After this we find the 1508 Saccon edition's first major text, the well-known biography of Jerome, *Plaerosque nimirum*, included without the criticism of it that Erasmus and other prior editors put forward in their editions.<sup>1708</sup>

*Plaerosque nimirum* is the first major text after the 1508 Saccon edition's index. In the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) we see punctuation marks entered into the text of *Plaerosque nimirum* in black and in red ink. I shall cite these marks in order to show that the Froben editors, including but not limited to Beatus, used the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) in order to prepare the 1516 *Edition*. In the text of *Plaerosque nimirum*, in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) we count thirty-two punctuation marks written into the printed text, most of them dashes that usually signalled commas. In the 1516 *Edition* we find commas in twenty-nine out of the thirty-two punctuation marks marked by hand in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K

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<sup>1706</sup> See Hain 8565.

<sup>1707</sup> 1508 Selestat Saccon: Narrat beatus Hieronymus vitam quam tenuit in eremo. This poem is also included in the second part of the 1497 Kessler edition along with the same image of Jerome.

<sup>1708</sup> See 1516 *Edition* II, f. 235r (*censura historiae sequentis*): Hanc historiam parum respondere tanti viri meritis, indicatum est et ab aliis ante nos. Nec omnino naenias huiusmodi verius quam libros eramus aedituri, nisi quemadmodum dixi, decretum fuisset, nihil omittere, quod vel eruditus desideraret lector, vel ineruditus. For prior editors' remarks see the 1489 and 1492 Kessler editions, in which we see a warning placed before the text of *Plaerosque nimirum*: 'Divi Hieronymi vita quae communiter legitur sub auctore incerto, non satisfaciens meritis tanti doctoris.' We see this same warning in other prior printed editions that followed Lelli's organization and included his commentaries, including the 1470 Roman edition.

518). We see this pattern repeated in a number of other letters. For ease of reading I shall cite these examples only briefly, and readers interested in further details can turn to this thesis' appendix. In Jerome's letter *Quoniam vetusto*, for example, out of eleven visible punctuation marks made in red ink in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), we find punctuation marks in seven of these eleven places in the 1516 *Edition*. Therefore, I shall mark the letter *Quoniam vetusto* in this way: *Quoniam vetusto* (7/11). Here the number eleven marks the number of punctuation marks that correctors marked in by hand in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), and which were not in the original text of the 1508 Saccon edition. The number seven marks the number of these punctuations marks hand-written in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) that correspond to punctuation marks printed in the 1516 *Edition*. In addition to *Plaerosque nimirum* and to the letter *Quoniam vetusto*, from my collation I am able to show similar correspondences in the letters *Et factum est* (7/8), *Septuaginta* (4/4), *Christiani interdum* (3/5), *Quod ad te huc usque* (139/152), *Litterae tuae* (37/38), *Frater Ambrosius* (52/57), *Paulus Apostolus* (20/24), *Sebesium nostrum* (6/6), *Diu te Romae* (6/6), *Epistola tua* (32/36), *Schedulae quas misistis* (73/80) and *Si cuncta corporis* (11/13). In the 1508 Selestat Saccon we see punctuation and corrections written in by hand for only part of the last letter, *Si cuncta corporis*, but the rest of these letters included marks and corrections throughout their texts. The above letters are only those that Erasmus cited explicitly in his *Life of Jerome* and that also have punctuation marks written in by correctors' hands in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518). I have undertaken similar collation of other texts such as Jerome's *Adversus Iovinianum*, and therefore I can confirm that to continue the above comparison would yield similar results. In all the letters that I have collated, a majority, and very often an overwhelming majority, of the punctuation marks which we find written into the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) by correctors' hands ended up in the printed text of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.

Such evidence becomes still stronger when we couple it with hand-written corrections to the text that we find in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518). It is clear that Beatus made some, but not all, of these corrections, written both in black and in red ink. Once again, I shall outline in a table the hand-written changes made to the text of *Plaerosque nimirum* printed in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) and how these compare to the text of *Plaerosque nimirum* printed near the end of the 1516 *Edition*'s second volume. The appendix to this thesis offers a more detailed analysis of the correspondence between corrections made in hand in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) and the printed text of 1516 *Edition* for all the letters cited in the foregoing paragraph. Below I have cited the text of passages of *Plaerosque nimirum* as printed in the original 1508 Saccon edition, the corrections to them written by hand into the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) and last the printed text of these same passages in the 1516 Jerome *Edition* (designated as the '1516 *Edition*').

- 1). 1508 Saccon: *quae humana generi sua austeritate remota*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector puts an *o* over the last *a* in *humana* in red ink.  
1516 *Edition*: *quae humano generi, sua austeritate remota*
  
- 2). 1508 Saccon: *esaie refert libro Diasculum*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector changes *Diasculum* to *Didasculum* in red ink.  
1516 *Edition*: *Gregorium nanque Naziazenum (ut idem in tertio explanationum Esaiae refert libro) didasculum, id est, magistrum suum fuisse testatur*
  
- 3). 1508 Saccon: *et immortalem bibliothecae suae auctorem recordaretur Tellium*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector changes *Tellium* to *Tullium* in red ink.  
1516 *Edition*: *et immortalem bibliothecae suae auctorem recordaretur Tullium*

- 4). 1508 Saccon: *in inferno autem qa [sic] confitebitur tibi*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector writes the letter *s* over *qa* such as to make a common abbreviation of *quis*, in red ink.  
1516 Edition: *In inferno autem quis confitebitur tibi*
- 5). 1508 Saccon: *Scribere inquit disposui*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector puts a mark over the letter *u* in *disposui*, in red ink.  
1516 Edition: *Scribere (inquit) disposui*
- 6). 1508 Saccon: *continue Christi potius auxilio poenituerit*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): the corrector puts a mark (looks like a *t*) over the letter *u* in *potius*, in red ink.  
1516 Edition: *continue Christi potius auxilio poenituerit*
- 7). 1508 Saccon: *docens quemadmodum scriptura divinas*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector changes *scriptura* to *scripturas*, in red ink.  
1516 Edition: *docens quemadmodum scripturas divinas*
- 8). 1508 Saccon: *id est beatti [sic] Petri fide*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector changes *beatti* to *beati*, in pencil or black ink.  
1516 Edition: *id est beati Petri fide*
- 9). 1508 Saccon: *Aureliano sponso conempto [sic]*  
1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector changes *conempto* to *contempto*, in red ink.  
1516 Edition: *Aureliano sponso contempto*
- 10). 1508 Saccon: *in Pontiana exultata est isola*

1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): the corrector changes *exultata* to *exulata*, in red ink.

1516 Edition: *in Pontiana exiliata est insula*

- 11). 1508 Saccon: *huius monasterii quodam priscorum*

1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector changes *quodam* to *quoddam*, in black ink.

1516 Edition: *huius monasterii quoddam priscorum*

- 12). 1508 Saccon: *peragrantes ut quoddam mortis*

1508, K 518: The corrector puts the word *an* over *ut*, in red ink.

1516 Edition: *peragrantes, ut quoddam mortis*

- 13). 1508 Saccon: *sed eum ut dum gubernantes*

1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector puts a correction mark over *dum* and writes *dudum* in the margins, in black ink.

1516 Edition: *sed eum ut dudum gubernantes*

- 14). 1508 Saccon: *camelos sicut erant onusti*

1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): the corrector strikes out the *c* in *sicut* such as to change the text to *si ut*, in red ink.

1516 Edition: *camelos, sicut erant onusti*

- 15). 1508 Saccon: *Sumpto quoque cibo ac benedictione camelis accepta exultantes glatulantesque ad propria remeare*

1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518): The corrector changes *accepta* to *acceptis*, *glatulantesque* to *gratulantesque* and *remeare* to *remearem*, in red ink.

1516 Edition: *Sumpto quoque cibo, ac benedictione cum camelis accepta, exultantes gratulantesque ad propria remearunt*

The texts of all the letters that I have cited in this chapter include similar hand-written emendations in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), in which we see equally detailed and

sometimes far more extensive interventions by correctors. To take *Plaerosque nimirum* for our example, since we see fifteen corrections hand-written in the text in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), I shall cite it as *Plaerosque nimirum* (15). In the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) we see hand-written corrections in the letters *Quoniam vetusto* (2), *Et factum est* (8), *Septuaginta* (1), *Christiani interdum* (2), *Quod ad te huc usque* (27), *Litterae tuae* (7), *Frater Ambrosius* (14), *Paulus Apostolus* (3), *Sebesium nostrum* (2), *Diu te Romae* (1), *Epistola tua* (13), *Schedulae quas misistis* (13), *Si cuncta corporis* (5) and many others that I have not included in this chapter. From collating the text of these letters in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) and with the 1516 *Edition*'s text we can make several remarks with confidence.

Firstly, at least two and probably several correctors, including Beatus, worked on the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) in order to prepare the 1516 *Edition*'s printed text. For example, many of the hand-written corrections and marginal notes to the letter *Frater Ambrosius* made in red ink in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) are clearly in Beatus' hand, but there are also corrections to this letter made in black ink and in pencil that are in unknown, but clearly contemporary, scripts.<sup>1709</sup> Second, we find that the majority of corrections made to the text in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) are printed in the text of the 1516 *Edition* (see numbers 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13 in the above table). Third, despite the foregoing observation, we do not always find the corrections proposed in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) implemented in the 1516 *Edition*. At times the text remains as it was printed in the 1508 Saccon edition despite hand-written corrections made in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (see numbers 5, 6, 7, 12 and 14 in the above table).<sup>1710</sup> At others, the text in the 1516 *Edition*

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<sup>1709</sup> In the 1508 edition we read (see also Appendix LVIII): *Apollonius sive ille magnus*...In red ink, and later in pencil, the corrector changes *magnus* to *magus*. Rhenanus wrote the correction in red ink. In the 1516 *Edition* the printed text reads: *Apollonius, sive ille magus*.

<sup>1710</sup> For example, in the letter *Quod ad te huc usque*, the corrector changed the word *digamis* (someone who has been married twice, i.e., not to two people at the same time) to *bigamis* (a bigamist), but we still read the word *digamis* in the same passage in the 1516 *Edition*. See Appendix XLIII.

is different from both the printed text of the 1508 Saccon edition and the hand-written corrections made to it in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (see numbers 2 and 10).<sup>1711</sup> Fourth, many different readings in the 1516 *Edition*'s text were not written in by correctors in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), nor were they indicated in the 1516 *Edition*'s *scholia*. Sometimes such differences are considerable.<sup>1712</sup> In the fifteenth entry in the above table, we see an example of each of the above conclusions: the word *glatulantes* in the 1508 Saccon edition's printed text is changed by correctors in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) to *gratulantes*, and the text is printed thus (*gratulantes*) in the 1516 *Edition*. The word *accepta*, however, printed in the 1508 Saccon but changed by correctors to *acceptis* in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), was still printed as *accepta* in the 1516 *Edition*. As for unmarked changes, the word *remeare* printed in the 1508 Saccon was changed by correctors to *remearem* in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), but printed in the 1516 *Edition* as *remearunt*. Also, the 1516 *Edition* reads *cum camelis* where the 1508 Saccon's printed text reads *camelis* – for this word there was no hand-written correction to the text, so the change to the 1516 *Edition*'s final text was made during another intervention. We should keep in mind that the above corrections to *Plaerosque nimirum* are for a text that was quarantined in the 1516 *Edition*'s second volume of *spuria*, and whose problems editors of Jerome had recognized and advertised in their editions since the 1470 Roman edition.<sup>1713</sup> The corrections to many of the letters cited above, such as the letters *Quod ad te huc usque*, *Litterae tuae* and *Frater Ambrosius*, were far more extensive.

From this analysis, we can confirm that Dill's thesis was correct. The 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) was clearly not the *Druckvorlage* since it is not cast off; that is, there is no

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<sup>1711</sup> See Appendix CXXVIII-CXXIX for transcriptions.

<sup>1712</sup> See Appendix CXXVIII-CXXIX for transcriptions.

<sup>1713</sup> 1470 Roman I, f. 6v: Divi Hieronymi vita quae communiter legitur sub autore incerto, non satisfaciens meritis tanti doctoris.

marking of signature and page numbers which we usually see in an actual *Druckvorlage* – and which we very clearly see in the 1497-1498 Venetian edition of Jerome’s commentaries that the Froben editors used for volumes five through nine of the 1516 *Edition*. It is therefore likely that the hand-written corrections made in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) were preparatory or parallel to corrections made in the *Druckvorlage*, which presumably would also have been a copy of the 1508 Saccon edition. In the process of transferring corrections from one printed edition to another, words and marks could be misinterpreted and incorrectly written, new or different evidence could be brought into consideration and minds could change. The correspondence between hand-written corrections made to the text in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) and the 1516 *Edition* leave little doubt, however, that the Froben editors used it extensively in order to prepare the latter edition’s text. Nowhere in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) did I see handwriting that might be Erasmus’, so his interventions were doubtless written into another copy, as Dill suggests. Moreover, the complete absence of hand-written corrections to the third part of the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), which includes important letters such as *Audi filia*, suggests that at some point in the correction process, the editors’ attention turned to another printed copy.<sup>1714</sup> More thorough collation of the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) and the 1516 *Edition* will confirm the above conclusions and yield many new ones, and I believe that the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518) still has much to teach us about the creation of the 1516 *Edition* and more broadly about printing and editing in the 1500s and the 1510s at Basel. I hope that this chapter and further details included in this thesis’ appendix will spur more studies of the marginal comments and corrections in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), such as the comparison of the different handwritings in this copy with that of the editors and correctors who worked on the 1516 *Edition*.

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<sup>1714</sup> In Basel University’s copy of the 1497 Kessler edition, we do, in fact, see sixteenth-century corrections and markings very similar to those in the 1508 Selestat Saccon (K 518), and which are with a few exceptions present only in the third part of the 1497 edition. The edition has shelf-mark INC 751.



## PART II: CHAPTER XIII

### TEXTS IN COMPARISON

In a letter written to Erasmus dated 11 December 1516, George Spalatinus (1484-1545),<sup>1715</sup> chaplain to the Duke of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, described his employer's enthusiasm for Erasmus' works. According to Spalatinus, Frederick had filled his library with all Erasmus' books and was also of a mind to buy all his future editions. Frederick had also read at least some of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*: 'My most merciful prince, Duke Frederick of Saxony, Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, who is as eminent for wisdom, religion and learning as he is rich...has lately seen with admiration the works of Saint Jerome so well restored in your edition that before you corrected them we might seem to have possessed any author's works rather than Jerome's'.<sup>1716</sup> In the days immediately following the *Edition*'s first publication, such praise was a common refrain of many readers whose testimony survives in Erasmus' correspondence. We have already seen, for example, the great French humanist Guillaume Budé's admiration for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1717</sup> In answer to Erasmus' press campaign letter, Cardinal Riario remarked that Erasmus' cleansing of Jerome's text would win him eternal gratitude and renown: 'That you have purged Saint Jerome and recalled him to the light of day touches me nearly, since I share with him my priesthood in the Roman church. You have indeed raised in his honour a noble monument, and it will preserve your

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<sup>1715</sup> See *Contemporaries* 3, 266-268.

<sup>1716</sup> Allen 501 (from George Burckhardt/Spalatinus), 39-47: Habet etiam Princeps meus clementissimus, Dux Fridericus Saxoniae, Sacri Romani Imperii Elector, non minus sapientia et religione et doctrina quam opibus praestantissimus, libros tuos omnes, quoscunque invenimus, in sua bibliotheca ducali, comparaturus etiam reliquos quotquot posthac ubicunque edideris terrarum. Vidit nuper cum admiratione opera divi Hieronymi te recognitore adeo restituta ut ante tuam castigationem nihil minus quam Hieronymi libros habuisse possimus videri.

<sup>1717</sup> Allen 583, 225-231.

name eternally as well as his.<sup>1718</sup> Perhaps it is telling that the cardinal shared the ‘priesthood’ and not the ‘cardinalate’ with Jerome. Praise from Erasmus’ humanist colleagues and supporters often included rhetoric that we find in Erasmus’ advertisement for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, as well as in his introductory letters in that work. Willibald Pirckheimer wrote to Erasmus in December 1515: ‘I rejoice that Saint Jerome has at last found someone to restore him to his original purity, and cannot think that this has happened without some special divine providence.’ You are indeed to be congratulated, for your labours will win you the favour of God and of his saints, and of the world.’<sup>1719</sup> However gladly contemporary humanists took up and repeated the claims of Erasmus and of other Froben editors that Jerome had been wholly ‘restored’ or ‘reborn’ in the 1516 *Edition*, without further examination we cannot accept such claims simply at face value. The main purpose of the next two chapters is to examine more closely what Erasmus and other Froben editors and correctors truly did in order to correct and to restore the text of Jerome’s letters.

In her treatment of Erasmus’ editorial work on the pagan Classics, Eileen Bloch concludes: ‘We cannot know exactly how Erasmus went about emending...ancient texts; we have only sparse information about the manuscripts he used and even less about his methods of collation. For the most part, we must rely on Erasmus’ own descriptions of his work.’<sup>1720</sup> D’Amico extended this observation to include the 1516 Jerome *Edition*: ‘while Erasmus offered an eloquent defence of a textual method and a sound explanation of the sources of

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<sup>1718</sup> Allen 340, 38-41: Quod divum Hieronymum emaculatum in lucem revocasti, ad me nonnihil videtur attinere, qui sacerdotium cum illo commune in Romana Ecclesia obtineo. Nae tu praeclarum illi monumentum erexisti, tui quoque nominis aeternam memoriam servaturum.

<sup>1719</sup> Allen 375, 12-15: Gaudeo beatum Hieronymum tandem reperisse qui illum pristino restitueret candori; quod non absque singulari divina dispositione accidisse reor. Felix tu, qui laboris istis Deo, sanctis ac mundo acceptior eris.

<sup>1720</sup> Eileen Bloch, ‘Erasmus and the Froben Press: the Making of an Editor’, in *Library Quarterly* 35 (1965): 109-120.

corruption, his own editorial practice does not give us a clear illustration of his principles',<sup>1721</sup> and he did not take much care 'to teach the way [textual criticism] should be done and to lead others'.<sup>1722</sup> Adding to our list of unknowns, Henk Jan de Jonge has written that of at least twenty-one editions printed before 1515, 'it is impossible...to determine which editions of Jerome's letters Erasmus used before and in 1516'.<sup>1723</sup> While such prudence is welcome, by means of comparing the text of the 1516 *Edition* with the text of Jerome's letters taken from different prior printed editions we can at least come to a better understanding of some of the editorial principles that Erasmus held and put into practice for the former. We can also determine with reasonable certainty some of the prior printed editions that Erasmus used during his years of work in order 'to restore' Jerome for all Christendom. For the sake of brevity, for ease of reference and with a mind to spare readers my own translations, in order to describe Erasmus' editorial methods I shall use the texts of Jerome's letter to Eustochium *Audi filia* and his letter to Paulinus *Frater Ambrosius* whenever possible, since the texts of these letters as well as Erasmus' *scholia* to them have been translated into English in the *Collected Works of Erasmus*.<sup>1724</sup> When necessary, I shall cite other letters, only some of which are included in the *Collected Works*. For all twenty-nine of Jerome's letters that I have examined, I shall present each passage from them which Erasmus singled out in his *scholia* as corrupted or otherwise in need of emendation. I shall then compare these passages with the text of the same passages in the 1508 Saccon edition, the 1497 Kesler edition (a later edition of which Erasmus may have bought in 1500),<sup>1725</sup> the 1470 Schoiffer edition and in the 1470 Roman (Sweynheim and Pannartz) edition. When needed for my analysis, I shall also cite

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<sup>1721</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 36.

<sup>1722</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 109.

<sup>1723</sup> ASD IX-2, 222, note 938. For his evidence de Jonge cites Fritz Husner's catalogue of Erasmus' library in 'Die Bibliothek des Erasmus', in *Gedenkschrift zum 400. Todestage des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Basel: Braus-Riggenbach, 1936), 228-259. This note is to a passage from Erasmus' *Apologia ad Annotationes Stunicae*. See ASD IX-2, pages 220-222, notes 937-940.

<sup>1724</sup> See CWE 61, 155-193 for the text of and *scholia* to *Audi filia*. See pages 207-230 for the text of and *scholia* to *Frater Ambrosius*.

<sup>1725</sup> Dill I, 86.

passages from the Mentelin edition of Jerome's letters published in Strasburg in the late 1460s, which seems to have been based manuscript tradition different from that of the Schoiffer and of Bussi's two Roman editions.<sup>1726</sup> In an appendix to this thesis I have included similar comparisons of passages from the 1516 Jerome *Edition* and from four of the above prior editions of Jerome's letters in tables. In choosing which letters to compare, I have tried to draw from all the letters that Erasmus clearly cited or used as a source in his *Life of Jerome*. In order to support my conclusions I shall reference these letters, such that readers wishing for more examples can find them easily in this thesis' appendix. In this chapter I shall show some important sources which Erasmus and the Froben editors considered in order to construct the 1516 *Edition*'s text. In the chapter to follow I shall outline important editorial principles and concerns that emerge from a closer look at this text and at Erasmus' *scholia*.

Drawing from his knowledge of and his unmatched access to the *fontes* of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, Husner believed that the Froben editors did not use manuscripts of Jerome's letters 'for a general revision of the text' but rather, 'at the most, collated manuscripts in order to resolve problems in particular passages'.<sup>1727</sup> If so, then they followed the common editorial practice of the time, which itself reflected widespread attitudes about early printed texts and manuscripts. As Silvia Rizzo has noted, 'the printed book in the eyes of the humanists did not look different from a manuscript', but was instead 'nothing other than a manuscript created with a different technology'.<sup>1728</sup> For example, Julia Haig Gaisser believes that Filippo Beroaldo bothered little, if at all, to look at manuscripts when writing his great commentary on Apuleius' *Golden Ass*. She suggests that like many other humanists, Beroaldo 'cared little' about the difference between printed texts and manuscripts and probably used

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<sup>1726</sup> Dill I, 51-52; 55.

<sup>1727</sup> Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 142.

<sup>1728</sup> See Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 69.

Bussi's 1469 edition as his base-text.<sup>1729</sup> Even Poliziano, according to Rizzo, undertook most of his work through the collation of early printed texts.<sup>1730</sup> Widely hailed today as 'the first among the humanists to give scientific rigour to collation', Poliziano was often unable to live up to the principles of emendation that he announced.<sup>1731</sup> But for his textual criticism Poliziano did value manuscripts above all other available sources, and his 'new standards for the use of sources represented a clear break with the methods of the last generations'.<sup>1732</sup> As Grafton has described:

Politian's use of his sources was also different in kind from that of his predecessors. He was the first to compare and evaluate sources in a historical way – that is, in the way which is still employed...even a group of concordant sources must be investigated, and those which were entirely derived from others must be eliminated from consideration. The way to perform such an investigation was to arrange the sources genealogically, and then to pay attention only to the source from which the others were derived.<sup>1733</sup>

In one of his examples, Grafton describes the originality of Poliziano's thinking by comparing his and Beroaldo's treatment of the same passage from Pliny. Whereas Beroaldo was 'completely unconcerned with the dependence or independence of his sources', Poliziano charted a new course: 'For him the question is no longer, as it was for Beroaldo, to amass evidence indiscriminately, but to discriminate, to reduce the number of witnesses that the scholar [needed] to take into account. It was this new approach to source criticism that made possible Poliziano's revolutionary transformation of philology.'<sup>1734</sup> Grafton's analysis continues in greater detail and draws mainly from *Centuria prima* of Poliziano's *Miscellanea* and relevant examples in Beroaldo's works.<sup>1735</sup> The *Centuria prima*, and therefore many of Poliziano's textual-critical ideas, had been available in print since the 1489 Florentine *editio*

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<sup>1729</sup> Haig Gaisser, *Fortunes of Apuleius*, 199-200.

<sup>1730</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 73.

<sup>1731</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 249. Kenney, *Classical Text*, 8-12.

<sup>1732</sup> See Jill Kraye, 'Cicero, Stoicism and Textual Criticism: Poliziano on "katorthom"', in *Rinascimento*, 23 (1983): 90. See Anthony Grafton, 'On the Scholarship of Politian and Its Context', in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 40 (1977): 160.

<sup>1733</sup> Grafton, 'Scholarship of Politian', 162-163.

<sup>1734</sup> Grafton, 'Scholarship of Politian', 164.

<sup>1735</sup> Grafton, 'Scholarship of Politian', 164-170.

*princeps* and easily available to Erasmus and to other humanists in the 1498 Aldine edition of Poliziano's *Collected Works*.

My examination of Erasmus' *scholia* to the 1516 *Edition* upholds Husner's thesis that Erasmus' engagement with manuscript sources for the *Edition* was limited. Nevertheless, in principle, at least, Erasmus and the Froben editors also prized manuscripts and claimed that they were needed in order to establish a reliable text from a corrupted tradition.<sup>1736</sup> It is true that their practice was much less systematic than they wished their readers to believe, and confusion of terminology can arise, since Erasmus and his contemporaries often used the words *codex* and *exemplar* for both printed and manuscript examples.<sup>1737</sup> Still, the Froben editors' commitment to the importance of manuscript sources is unmistakable. We see this in the introductory letter ascribed to Johannes Froben in the 1518 Froben edition of Suetonius' *Vitae Caesarum* (*Lives of the Caesars*).<sup>1738</sup> This letter begins with an emphatic statement of the Froben editors' ideal: 'Our custom is, esteemed reader, that as we undertake to print any ancient author in our founts, if we are able to find any manuscript (*exemplar manu scriptum*) in monastic libraries, we try to borrow it and to use it.'<sup>1739</sup> In this particular example, which Hirstein has ably brought to our attention, plague and politics prevented the Froben editors from getting their hands on the apposite manuscript in time for printing.<sup>1740</sup> The presses could

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<sup>1736</sup> See *Scribes and Scholars*, 162-163. See James Hirstein, 'Beatus Rhenanus et la "philologie humaniste"', in *Beatus Rhenanus*, 7.

<sup>1737</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 69-75.

<sup>1738</sup> James Hirstein treats this edition in detail in his master's thesis 'Érasme et l'Histoire', presented at the *Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance* at Tours in December 1984. See Hirstein, 'Beatus Rhenanus'. Between pages 8 and 9 we have an image of the introductory note found in the 1518 *Vitae Caesarum*, f. 8r.

<sup>1739</sup> See 1518 *Vitae Caesarum*, f. 8r in Hirstein, 'Beatus Rhenanus', 8-9: Hoc moris habemus optime lector, ut excusuri typis nostris vetustum aliquem autorem, exemplar manu scriptum e bibliothecis Coenobiorum si reperiri queat, commodato sumamus.

<sup>1740</sup> See 1518 *Vitae Caesarum*, f. 8r in Hirstein, 'Beatus Rhenanus', 8-9: Proinde cum Spartianum aedere vellemus, semel atque iterum misso nuncio nobiles Murbacensis Monasterii sodales rogavimus, ut antiquum quod illic servari sciebamur exemplar ad nos darent. At illi negabant se vel tantillum in ea re posse, non praesente abbate, qui forte tum ob luem in Burgundiam procul avolarat. Itaque ob tardiores huius ad suos redditum serius Spartiani vetustum codicem accepimus, videlicet octo ternionibus iam impressis. Quo simul tempore Spartianum e Francofordia nacti sumus Aldinis excusum typis, et Iohannis Baptisti Egnatii cura

not wait idly, so the Froben editors used the old Aldine edition for their base-text for the first ninety-six or so pages of this work, until at last the manuscript arrived. They duly stopped the presses ‘in order to take into account this new source’.<sup>1741</sup> They clearly took the new arrival seriously and valued it as much as, if not more than, the printed text already at hand.

In addition to their undoubted work with manuscript sources, collaborators and editors of the Amerbach-Froben press repeatedly and proudly advertised their tireless search for manuscripts. Some of them, including Beatus and Cratander, eventually undertook important scholarship based on manuscripts only recently discovered in nearby monastic holdings.<sup>1742</sup> The Amerbachs’ correspondence from 1506 until 1516 offers much testimony showing that editors associated with the Amerbach press searched for manuscripts for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* as well as for other ongoing projects. Johannes Amerbach often charged his sons to look for manuscripts and enlisted scholars such as Leontorius, Reuchlin and Reisch, among others, to scour monastic libraries.<sup>1743</sup> The introductory letter to the 1516 Jerome *Edition*’s sixth volume repeated many ideas that come up often in the Amerbachs’ correspondence for at least a decade before Erasmus’ arrival in Basel. This letter is ascribed to Bruno Amerbach in the *Edition*, but the surviving manuscript is in Erasmus’ hand.<sup>1744</sup> Erasmus most likely wrote the text, but whoever penned it stressed the collaborative work of the Froben editors, described their ideal editorial methods and repeated the polemical suggestion that the men working at Froben’s house *zum Sessel* (at today’s 3 *Totengässlein*) had rescued Jerome from oblivion:

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restitutum, quem in his quae imprimenda supererant, secuti sumus, sic tamen ut hac de causa manu scriptum exemplum non abiicerimus. Nam tametsi mendosum, qualia sunt omnia propemodum veterum monumenta, quae nunc in libris extant, profuit tamen.

<sup>1741</sup> See Hirstein, ‘Beatus Rhenanus et la “philologie humaniste”’, 7-10.

<sup>1742</sup> See *Scribes and Scholars*, 139. See D’Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 71-109.

<sup>1743</sup> For example, read about Reuchlin’s search for manuscripts in AK 451.

<sup>1744</sup> See the editor’s comments to AK 555.

And even though this treasure is most precious in and of itself, it will be somewhat dearer to you if you know that it has been born from the sweat and in the barely believable vigils of many learned men, among whom were John Reuchlin, John Cuno, Gregory Reisch and Conrad Pellikan. These men worked to restore Jerome's works partly from old exemplars (*ex vetustis exemplaribus*) and partly from prudent conjecture (*ex sagaci coniectura*), not ignoring the fact that when there is little remaining of good writers, one should strive harder, so that they be raised from the dead.<sup>1745</sup>

The writer compared these scholars' 'battles' with textual corruption to the battles of Homer's heroes in the *Iliad*. He claimed, moreover, that in the course of this campaign against corruption, monasteries throughout Europe had sent exemplars to the Froben press:

So many noblemen of all Greece fought to bring back one Helen. But at the end of the day, how many Helens is one Jerome worth? Therefore, why should it seem odd, if we have had recourse to the help of so many learned men in this great undertaking? Nor should we forget to mention those who helped us by lending exemplars, so that learned men know what they owe to them. The monks of Eguisheim [monastery near Colmar, *Marpacenses*] sent to us some most ancient volumes, the monks of Lucelle [south-west of Basel] some as well as the monks of Rheinau [*Maiaurugiani*]. The monks of Saint Blaise in the Black Forest, the monks of Saint Gall, the monks of Wissembourg [*Albiburgenses*] and of Murbach kindly shared what they had.<sup>1746</sup>

In this passage we see the Froben editors' reliance on monastic colleagues and the sources that they could provide, and we can remark that the monks at Murbach seem to have been especially helpful to the Froben editors, since they later helped, as we have seen above, with the 1518 Froben edition of the *Vitae Caesarum*. The writer emphasized the need to have access to and to employ such older exemplars in order properly to carry out editorial work, and criticized in no uncertain terms 'conjectural' correction unsupported by 'old codexes':

For without the help of old codexes, one simply cannot restore writings. The works of men who think that they should immediately add to or take away from a text according to whatever comes to their

<sup>1745</sup> 1516 Edition VI, f. 1v: Atque hic quidem thesaurus pro se preciosissimus, aliquanto tibi carior est futurus, si scieris quod a multis eruditis viris, e quorum numero sunt Ioannes Reuchlinus, Conon Norimbergensis, Gregorius Reischius, Chonradus Pellicanus, haud aestimandis vigiliis sit desudatum, ut haec partim ex vetustis exemplaribus, partim ex sagaci coniectura restituerentur, non ignorantibus quo minus superest bonorum authorum, hoc acrius annitendum, ut ab interitu vindicentur.

<sup>1746</sup> 1516 Edition VI, f. 1v: Equidem tot totius Graeciae procures, pro una Helena restituenda dimicarunt, at quot Helenis unus prestat Hieronymus? Cui mirum igitur videri possit, si tam multis eruditissimorum hominum suppetiis ad hoc praeclarum negotium sumus usi? Neque vero silentio praetereundi sunt, quid institutum nostrum, commodatis exemplaribus adiuverunt, ut illis etiam se debere sciant studiosi. Miserunt ad nos itaque Marpacenses coenobitae volumina aliquot vetustissima, nonnulla Lucellenses, sed et Maiaurugiani, et Coenobitae divi Blasii in silva Hercinia, et divi Galli, et Albiburgenses et Murbachii, quae habebant benigne, communicarunt. For help with the Latin place-names in this passage I used *Orbis Latinus*, eds. Johann Georg, Theodor Grässe, eds. (Braunschweig: Klinkhardt and Biermann, 1972).



mind are never good. Instead, we need first and foremost authoritative exemplars and a prudent judgement.<sup>1747</sup>

As did Poliziano, this foreword's writer believed that the support of a variety of 'old codexes' was necessary for good conjectural emendation, which was not mere 'personal conjecture or judgement' meant to make sense out of an incomprehensible passage. It too had to be based on 'scrupulous' attention to the text and to its historical context.<sup>1748</sup> He and the Froben editors may not have adopted all of Poliziano's rigour, but Erasmus also emphasized and publicized the idea that conjectural emendation should be based on the least corrupt texts available and that ideally such emendations should be pointed out to readers. The above citation referring to the origins of copies that the Froben editors used for the 1516 *Edition* resembled Poliziano's citation of the origins of certain exemplars, even if it lacked the precision which Poliziano gave readers at times.<sup>1749</sup>

By 1516 editors' claims about emending printed texts with the help of 'old codexes' were already stock-phrases of forewords and introductory paratexts, if not clichés.<sup>1750</sup> Even before the spread of the printed book in Europe, Italian humanists such as Salutati and the Venetian scholar Leonardo Giustinian (1388-1446) had written about the need to compare different editions 'diligently' in order to correct a given text.<sup>1751</sup> But we can remark in the 1516 Jerome *Edition's* commentaries not only an increased attention to detail that suggests acquaintance with Poliziano or at least with his methods, but also an increased caution about conjectural emendation which Erasmus helped to publicize in the 1510s, especially among

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<sup>1747</sup> 1516 Edition VI, f. 1v: Nam sine veterum auxilio codicum, in restituendis authoribus nihil agitur. Nunquam enim eorum exemplum placuit, qui prout temere quodvis in mentem inciderit, ita scripturam statim aut supplendam, aut eradendam putant. Exemplariorum autoritate, et imprimis iudicio neutique praecipiti opus est.

<sup>1748</sup> See Vittore Branca, *Poliziano e l'umanesimo della parola* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1983), 165. See Branca's chapter, 'Il nuovo metodo filologico e la *Centuria Secunda*' in pages 157-167.

<sup>1749</sup> See examples from Poliziano in Branca, *Poliziano*, 159-160.

<sup>1750</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 8-30.

<sup>1751</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 249; 249-299.

Northern European humanists who ‘lagged behind their Italian contemporaries’.<sup>1752</sup> In his foreword to the 1515 Froben Seneca edition, Erasmus expressed this caution more clearly: ‘In some places I had to guess; although I did that sparingly, knowing that the surviving works of such great men are a sacred heritage, in which one should move not merely with caution but with proper reverence.’<sup>1753</sup> If Seneca was a ‘sacred heritage’ for Erasmus, he surely thought it necessary to be even more careful with the writings of Church Fathers such as Jerome, whose ideas were of foremost importance to the Christian republic.

In a time when manuscripts were often used as *Druckvorlage* and destroyed forever in the printing process,<sup>1754</sup> Erasmus prized them and, according to Kenney, ‘he was perfectly well aware that the only reliable source of improvement for current texts was to be found in better manuscripts’.<sup>1755</sup> In his introductory letter to the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, Erasmus described his own struggles with deciphering ‘volumes’ (*voluminibus*) that were apparently manuscripts:

Often too I had to work with volumes which it was no easy business to read, the forms of the script being either obscured by decay and neglect, or half eaten away and mutilated by worm and beetle, or written in the fashion of Goths and Lombards, so that even to learn the letter-forms I had to go back to school; not to mention for the moment that the actual task of detecting, of smelling out as it were, anything that does not sound like a true and genuine reading (*germana lectio*) requires a man in my opinion who is well informed, quick-witted and alert...<sup>1756</sup>

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<sup>1752</sup> D’Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 27.

<sup>1753</sup> Allen 325, 44-47: In nonnullis divinandum fuit; quamquam id quidem fecimus parcius, non ignari sacram esse rem tantorum vivorum monumenta, et in his non modo circumspecte verumetiam religiose versari oportere.

<sup>1754</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 82-83.

<sup>1755</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 50. See D’Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 32-33.

<sup>1756</sup> Allen 396, 170-177: Et saepe cum his voluminibus erat res quae vel legere non mediocris esset negotii, quippe litterarum figuris vel carie situque oblitteratis, vel tinearum ac blactarum iniuria semiosis ac mutilis, vel Gotthorum aut Longobardorum more depictis, ut in formis etiam noscendis mihi fuerit repuerascendum: ut ne commemorem interim, quod illud ipsum animadvertere ac velut olfacere, si quid parum resipiat germanam ac veram lectionem, hominis sit mea sententia nec ineruditi nec stupidi nec oscitantis.

In this case, Erasmus' description of 'Gothic' and 'Lombardian' handwriting was typical of humanist editors of fifteenth century Italy, including Poliziano, Valla and Flavio Biondo.<sup>1757</sup> Erasmus affirmed his belief that 'more correct exemplars' were essential to establishing the true text (*germana lectio*), whether through the comparison of exemplars (*ope codicum*) or through prudent conjecture (*ope ingenii*). 'The most difficult thing', Erasmus wrote to Warham, 'is either to conjecture from corruptions of different kinds what the author wrote, or to guess the original reading on the basis of such fragments and vestiges of the shapes of the script as may survive'.<sup>1758</sup> In all three of his press campaign letters for the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus remarked that in addition to correcting Jerome's letters by his own 'wits' (*nostroque ingenio, nostrapte sagacitate*),<sup>1759</sup> he and the Froben editors had emended Jerome through 'the comparison of many copies, and those of great antiquity'.<sup>1760</sup> Despite the 'Herculean' efforts that he recounted to Leo X,<sup>1761</sup> Erasmus understood that problems remained in the text, as he admitted in his introductory letter: 'Not that I would dare assert that none of the old corruptions, no traces of his previous ruined state, remain; I doubt if Jerome himself could achieve that without the aid of better exemplars than I have yet had the chance to use.'<sup>1762</sup>

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<sup>1757</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 114-116; 122-134.

<sup>1758</sup> Allen 396, 177-180: Atque super haec longe difficillimum est aut ex varie depravatis quid ab auctore positum fuerit conicere, aut et qualibuscunque figurarum fragmentis ac vestigiis primam divinare lectionem...

<sup>1759</sup> Allen 334, 104-107: Huius igitur lucubrationes omnes, praesertim epistolares, in quibus plurimum erat negotii, primum in ordinem digessimus; deinde mendas quibus obrutus erat magis quam oblitus, veterum auxilio codicum nostroque ingenio sustulimus.

<sup>1760</sup> Allen 333, 66-68: Hunc non aestimandus sudoribus, multis collatis exemplaribus iisque pervetustis emendavimus, adiectis in loco scholiis, quo possit inoffensus legi. See also Allen 335, 268-272: Epistolarum volumina – nam haec mihi proprie sumpsi – a mendis quibus extincta fuerant verius quam depravata, partim veterum collatione codicum, partim nostrapte sagacitate repurgavimus; Graeca, quae vel deerant omnino vel perperam erant addita, reposuimus diligenter.

<sup>1761</sup> Allen 335, 235-239.

<sup>1762</sup> Allen 396, 361-365: Non quod ausim confirmare nihil usquam veterum mendarum, hoc est nulla pristinae ruinae vestigia residere: quod haud scio an ipse praestare queat Hieronymus, nisi contingant exemplaria castigatiora quam nobis adhuc habere licuit. Illud summo adnixa studio consecuti sumus, vt non multum supersit.

We do not have to look far in Erasmus' other works to find examples of his belief in the usefulness of 'old codexes', though they may at times have proven 'even more full of error than the current copies'.<sup>1763</sup> In the *scholion* to the letter *Saepe et multum* beginning *In sua reciperet*, Erasmus based his judgements on 'older and less corrupted exemplars',<sup>1764</sup> and we see many other examples in which he clearly valued older sources for a variety of reasons, including to emend Greek passages in this letter of Jerome.<sup>1765</sup> In 1516, however, Erasmus did not appear to have the paleographical and other expertise needed in order to establish an hierarchy of manuscripts, and Reynolds and Wilson believe that his achievements as a textual scholar were limited for this very reason.<sup>1766</sup> Kenney suggested that Erasmus simply did not have the patience, the time or the materials to put into practice his better instincts of textual criticism.<sup>1767</sup> Erasmus may indeed have lamented to Warham that 'no more cruel enemy infects good literature than the man who sets out to correct it half-instructed, half-asleep, hasty and of unsound judgement'.<sup>1768</sup> Most of the time, however, he himself worked in a great hurry and he often, if not usually, left final drafts and corrections to others such as Beatus and Nesen. Therefore he was not in a position to oversee the problematic process of transferring his and others' notes and corrections from a *Druckvorlage* onto a new printed page.<sup>1769</sup>

<sup>1763</sup> Allen 325 (introduction to 1515 Froben Seneca edition), 31-38: Nec ullum alioqui auxilium in tantis rerum difficultatibus praeter duos vetustos codices, quorum alterum exhibuit e sua bibliotheca summus ille meorum studiorum Moecenas et incomparabile nostri saeculi decus, Gulielmus archiepiscopus Cantuariensis; alterum Regium apud Cantabrigienseis collegium suppetias misit; sed utrunque primum mutilum, deinde vulgatis etiam exemplaribus mendosior, ut minus fidendum fuerit auxiliaribus copiis quam ipsis hostibus.

<sup>1764</sup> See Appendix CXXIV for the *scholion* to *Saepe et multum* beginning *In sua reciperet*: Sic erat scriptum in vetustis et minus depravatis exemplaribus, atque ita legunt Graeci, ἐς τὰ ἴδια, id est, in propria: quasi dicas, in numerum rerum suarum. Quamquam ad sensum non admodum refert, suas legas, an sua.

<sup>1765</sup> See Appendix LV for the *scholion* beginning *In doctrinam, rationem, et usum* in the letter *Frater Ambrosius*: Hoc loco desunt graeca, quae ex veterum codicum vestigiis restituimus ad hunc modum, τὸ δόγμα, τὴν μέθοδον, τὴν ἐμπειρίαν, id est decretum, rationem et experientiam.

<sup>1766</sup> *Scribes and Scholars*, 160-163.

<sup>1767</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 49-52.

<sup>1768</sup> Allen 396: Nolim tamen hanc adire provinciam nisi qui non minus fide, religione, iudicio curaue polleant quam eruditione; quod nulla sit acerbior bonorum voluminum pestis quam semidoctus aut oscitabundus aut praeceps aut infelici iudicio castigat.

<sup>1769</sup> Kenney, *Classical Text*, 51.

Save for the above example drawn from the foreword to the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, Erasmus' editorship was typical of earlier Italian humanists in that most of the time he neither cited manuscripts with clear terms nor identified their origins.<sup>1770</sup> To my knowledge, in order to describe the age of particular copies, Erasmus used words such as *antiquus*, *vetus* and *vetustus* interchangeably in the *Edition*, adding modifiers (*pervetustus*) and superlatives (*vetustissimus*, *antiquissimus*) for emphasis.<sup>1771</sup> Despite the above indications of monastic loans, we still have no clear ideas about what, if any, manuscripts Erasmus actually used in his work for the 1516 *Edition*. Moreover, in my look at the *scholia* of over thirty letters in the 1516 *Edition*, I have noted only one case in which Erasmus almost surely consulted a manuscript in order to deal with a problem in the text. This was in a *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *Principio et fine*. He wrote about a problematic passage in this letter: 'I like what I find better in the manuscripts (*scriptis codicibus*), *principium et finis*'.<sup>1772</sup> Seemingly similar evidence can be misleading. In a *scholion* to the letter *Non debet charta* beginning *Rusticitas vernacula*, Erasmus remarked that 'some codexes read (*scriptum habebant*), *rusticitatis vernacula*'.<sup>1773</sup> The words *scriptum habebant* do not necessarily mean that Erasmus was referring to manuscripts in this case. What is more, whereas the 1508 Saccon and the 1497 Kessler editions have the variants *rusticitas vernacula* for this passage, both the 1470 Schöffer and the 1470 Roman editions read *rusticitatis vernacula*. Therefore, it is possible that Erasmus took the variants which he cited in the above *scholion* from printed texts. In this case *quidam codices scriptum habebant* could be better translated as 'some

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<sup>1770</sup> See Branca, *Poliziano*, 158.

<sup>1771</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 147-168.

<sup>1772</sup> See Appendix CVIII for the *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *Principio et fine*: *Magis aridet, quod in scriptis invenio codicibus, principium et finis, ut eundem deum dicat principium, et finem, alpha et ω. Principium in lege Mosaica, finem in evangelio.*

<sup>1773</sup> See Appendix V for the *scholion* to the letter *Non debet charta* beginning *Rusticitas vernacula*: *Quod graeci vocant ἐπὶ χώριον, hoc est proprium alicui loco. Quidam codices scriptum habebant, rusticitatis vernacula.* For a description of Poliziano's terms for describing manuscripts see Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 72-75.

exemplars read'. In the *scholion* to the letter *Saepe et multum* beginning *Tunc nostrorum διαλήρων contradictio*, Erasmus used this same expression (*scriptum habebant*).<sup>1774</sup> Pabel has also identified two examples elsewhere in the *scholia* in which Erasmus used similar terms, and closer examination would probably yield more.<sup>1775</sup> In the remaining twenty-eight letters that I have examined for this thesis, to my knowledge several more examples come up in the *scholia* in which Erasmus could have been referring to manuscripts, since he cited textual variants not found in prior printed editions. In his *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *ad Gerontiam*, for example, Erasmus cited variants of Gerontia's name that I have not found elsewhere in prior printed editions.<sup>1776</sup> In another case, the *scholion* to the letter *Si cuncta corporis* beginning *Et matris dolorem*, Erasmus may have changed the text in the 1516 *Edition* in order to match a variant that he cited in this *scholion* but which we do not find in the prior printed texts.<sup>1777</sup> In the long letter *Si cuncta corporis* I have identified three more passages in which Erasmus cited textual variants that we do not find, to my knowledge, in the editions printed before 1516 (*Pervenit ad Cod; Ac sanitate inclutam; De Pelusio magnam*). We see this pattern repeated in the *scholion* to the letter *Nihil Christiano* beginning *Qui*

<sup>1774</sup> See Appendix CXXIV for the *scholion* to the letter *Saepe et multum* beginning *Tunc nostrorum διαλήρων contradictio* (1516 *Edition* I, f. 53v): *Quidam codices ita scriptum habebant, qui vox nihil ad hunc locum facit: fortasse legendum nostrorum διαλλαγών contradictio. Diallagae, conciliatio est sive amicitia, seu foedus, ut intelligas Hieronymum non agnovisse amicum, aut collegam Ruffinum, sic enim ille vocabat hunc, posteaquam sensisset eum cum haereticis conspirasse. In nonnullis erat διδακτικῶν, quod epitheton Paulus tribuit episcopis, ob docendi munus. Idque mihi quoque maxime probatur, praesertim cum sequatur, protinus, pharizaeorum schola.*

<sup>1775</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 302- See 1516 *Edition* IV, f. 23v for the *scholion* to the letter *In septuagesimo septimo psalmo* beginning *Significantius graece dicitur*: *Ex vestigiis exemplarium colligo scriptum fuisse ξυλακισμοὶ ἄνδρος*, id est lignationes viri, nisi quis maluit ξυλίσματα ἄνδρος. Nam ξυλίζομαι est ligna incido, vel ligna colligo. Quidam adscripserat hoc loco ξυλακισμοφόρος. See 1516 *Edition* IV, f. 31v for the *scholion* to the letter *Epistolare officium* beginning *Non sunt suaves epulae*: *Locus hic in omnibus ferme codicibus varie depravatus habebatur. Quidam ita scriptum habebant: 'Quae non placent ac redolent.'* Mihi conferenti veterum ex ememplarium vestigia, videtur ita legendum: *'Non sunt suaves epulae, quae non placentam redolent, quas non condiit Apitius, in quibus nihil de magistrorum huius temporis iure sussumat.'*

<sup>1776</sup> See Appendix CV for the *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *ad Gerontiam*.

<sup>1777</sup> See Appendix XCIV for the *scholion* to the letter *Si cuncta corporis* beginning *Et matris dolorem*: *Nonnulla exemplaria habebant, 'matricis dolorem'.* Utraque lectio tolerabilis, nisi quod argutior est matris, ut intelligas affectum maternum, quoniam de filiarum obitu, paulo ante meminit.

*funiculo increpationis*, in the *scholion* to the letter *Schedulas quas misistis* beginning *Et mi ultra non faciam*, and in many more examples throughout the *scholia*.<sup>1778</sup>

It is only possible, and by no means certain, that Erasmus was referring to manuscripts in some of these examples. When analyzing Erasmus' *scholia* we must be careful with our translations, since it can easily prove inaccurate to translate words such as *exemplar* and *codex* as 'manuscript', as we often find them rendered in the *Collected Works of Erasmus*.<sup>1779</sup> For all their admirable accomplishments, these editions can give readers a misleading understanding of Erasmus' engagement with the manuscript tradition of Jerome's letters precisely because of this potential mistranslation.<sup>1780</sup> To take only the most appropriate and outstanding examples, in Erasmus' press campaign letters for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, the *Collected Works* translate the words *exemplar* and *codex* as 'manuscripts' in many passages in which it is not at all clear that this is the correct rendering.<sup>1781</sup> Pabel has likewise presented several passages in Erasmus' *scholia* as referring to manuscripts,<sup>1782</sup> but in none of these examples can we be sure that this is the correct translation.<sup>1783</sup> This is not academic hair-

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<sup>1778</sup> See Appendix XXVI for the *scholion* to the letter *Audi filia* beginning *Novellae olivarum*: Quidam codices habebant, sicut novellatio olivarum. This quotation comes from Psalm 121.

<sup>1779</sup> See, for instance, CWE 3, 40-41. Gregory Reisch is apparently referring to printed copies when he writes in Allen 23-25: Nullus emendatorum apud me codicum est, nullas unquam feci annotationes, demptis dictionibus Hebraicis quae sunt in exemplaribus. CWE 3 reads: 'I have nothing here in the way of good manuscripts, and have not written any notes, if you except the Hebrew words found in the printer's copy.'

<sup>1780</sup> See, for example, CWE 61, 184; 187; 189; 191. Among the many examples in which the editors of CWE 61 use the word 'manuscript' in their translations of Erasmus' *scholia*, there is not one where we can actually be sure that Erasmus used manuscripts.

<sup>1781</sup> See Allen 333, 66-68; 334, Allen 104-107; Allen 335, 268-272.

<sup>1782</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 302. See notes 163; 164.

<sup>1783</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 303. See notes 164; 165; 166. The passages in question from Jerome's letters to Damasus *Postquam epistolam tuam sanctitatis* and *Multi super hoc sermone* as well as to his letter to Florentius *In ea mihi parte*. See 1516 *Edition* IV, f. 14r: *αὐτοσχεδιασὶ* tibi confestim.) *αὐτοσχεδιάζω*, id est ruditer, ex tempore, et impraemeditate rem tracto. Unde *αὐτοσχεδιασὶ* adverbium tumultuanter, et ruditur. Propter hoc verbum non intellectum, in plerisque codicibus aliquot verba fuerant ommissa, quae ex pervetustis exemplaribus restituimus. 1516 *Edition* IV, f. 55v: Quae apud Graecos ponitur.) Hic locus in omnibus exemplaribus ita depravatus est, ut non possim liquido coniicere. Quamquam ex elementorum vestigiis ita legendum arbitror, *δέκσεωσώς ἄνα*, id est deprecationis, ut *ἄνα*, quae vox apud Graecos aliquando est obsecrantis, praesertim apud poetas. Verum hanc coniecturam meam protinus reiiciat, qui probabilius aliquid invenerit. Quidam asscripserat post verbum, ponitur *σχεῖλιασῖκος*, magis suam, ut opinor, coniecturam quam exemplaria secutus. 1516 *Edition* I, f. 24r/v: Helius.) Divus Hieronymus in epitaphio Paulae, indicat Hierusalem

splitting but rather an important observation that we must keep in mind when examining Erasmus' textual criticism for the 1516 *Edition* and elsewhere. In order to be safe with our translations, unless we have clear and indisputable evidence that Erasmus was referring to a manuscript, we should translate contemporary words which could mean both 'printed book' and 'manuscript', such as *liber*, *exemplar*, *volumen* and *codex*, with a neutral word such as 'exemplar' or 'copy'.<sup>1784</sup> This is the practice that I have tried to follow in this thesis.

When we take into account the ambiguities in Erasmus' vocabulary of textual criticism, in the twenty-nine letters that I have examined, we see only one example in which we can say with reasonable certainty that Erasmus referred to a manuscript (*codicis scriptis*).<sup>1785</sup> More thorough analysis of the *scholia* would doubtless uncover more cases, and more comparison of the *scholia* with prior printed editions and manuscripts could possibly provide stronger evidence that at least some of the readings not found in prior printed editions came from manuscripts. I can conclude, however, from a sampling of about a fifth of Jerome's authentic letters, that there is no convincing evidence that Erasmus or the other Froben editors made wide use of the manuscripts which we know were at their disposal.<sup>1786</sup> While Erasmus and the Froben editors surely used manuscripts from time to time in their work for the *Edition*, we can accept without much reservation the idea that for the 1516 *Edition*, 'manuscripts were consulted but not thoroughly collated, and no real effort was

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civitatem fuisse trinominem, Iebus, Salem et Hierusalem. Deinde ab Adriano, Heliam vocatam. Helius autem solem significat. Sed quoniam nonnulli codices habebant *Heliodromis*, nonnulli *Heliodromius*, potest fieri ut civitas fuerit a solis cursu vocata. Quamquam hic de portentis agit. Unde an Perses hoc loco mendo vacet, nonnihil addubito. Quae citra emendatorum exemplarium auxilium, ad plenum restitui non possunt. Non omnia possumus omnes. Sed illud mirum est, divum Hieronymum hoc loco non facere mentionem eius civitatis, quae a cane, quem adorat, nomen habet *κυνῶν*, cum huius meminerit, in Esaiae commentariis. Meminit et Plinius Cynopoleos, et Lycopoleos.

<sup>1784</sup> See Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 69.

<sup>1785</sup> This is in the *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *Principio et fine*. See Appendix CVIII.

<sup>1786</sup> See Dill I, 125.



made to establish their genealogy and interrelationships'.<sup>1787</sup> It is far more plausible that Erasmus and the Froben editors followed contemporary practice and based their texts and changes to them on the consultation and comparison of prior printed texts.

In Erasmus' commentaries to the letter *Audi filia*, I have noted eighteen *scholia* where Erasmus explicitly cited textual corruption, and tried to explain it and to deal with it in some way. From comparing five prior printed editions' readings for these passages,<sup>1788</sup> we see many examples in which Erasmus clearly used prior printed editions and we can therefore gain a better appreciation of how he edited Jerome's letters. The first *scholion* to this letter that brings up textual corruption begins *Et ante hominem suum*. Erasmus wrote:

This passage was corrupt in all the copies that I have seen. Some – and these were indeed the older ones – had the reading, 'before me when my flesh was good as dead' (*Et ante hominem suum, iam carne praemortua*). Some had 'before a man whose flesh was good as dead' (*Et ante hominem, sua iam carne praemortuum*). Again others had 'before all food, the flesh being as good as dead' (*Et ante omnem esum, iam sua carne praemortua*). Perhaps this passage should read: 'Within my breast, my flesh being as good as dead' (*Intra sinum, iam carne praemortua*) or 'within me, my flesh being as good as dead' (*Intra hominem suum, iam carne praemortua*). Thus one may understand that lust lives only in the mind since it is dead in the flesh. Or perhaps 'before me' (*ante hominem suum*) means before old age (*ante senectam*).<sup>1789</sup>

In this *scholion* Erasmus brought up another textual variant (*Et ante omnem esum, iam sua carne praemortua*) that did not, to my knowledge, appear in the printed textual tradition, and it is possible that Erasmus took this reading from a manuscript. Manuscript or not, this one *scholion* shows several important and common features of Erasmus' editorial practice for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. Treating each of these in turn, I shall also cite other *scholia* included in the appendix to this thesis so that the reader may easily find similar examples.

<sup>1787</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 32.

<sup>1788</sup> The 1516 *Edition*, the 1508 Saccon, the 1497 Kessler, the 1470 Schöffer and the 1470 Roman (Sweynheim and Pannartz) editions.

<sup>1789</sup> See Appendix XXV for the *scholion* to the letter *Audi filia* beginning *Et ante hominem suum*: Hic locus in omnibus quae viderim exemplaribus erat depravatus. Quaedam habebant, et quidem vetustiora: 'Et ante hominem suum, iam carne praemortua.' Quaedam ita: 'Et ante hominem, sua iam carne praemortuum.' Alia rursum: 'Et ante omnem esum, iam carne praemortua.' Fortasse legendum: 'Intra sinum, iam carne praemortua', aut 'intra hominem suum, iam carne praemortua', ut intelligas libidinem in sola mente vivere, cum in carne sit mortua. Aut 'ante hominem suum' id est, ante senectam.

Firstly, this *scholion* gives clear evidence that Erasmus knew the texts coming from the Lellian tradition as well as from the 1470 Schöffer edition, both of which he used in order to establish the 1516 *Edition*'s text.<sup>1790</sup> In his *scholion* to *Audi filia* Erasmus cited, for example, the variant *Et ante hominem suum, iam carne praemortua*, which appeared in the 1508 Saccon edition, the 1497 Kessler edition and the 1470 Roman edition. He also cited the variant *Et ante hominem, sua iam carne praemortuum*, which we find in the 1470 Schöffer edition. In this *scholion* Erasmus proposed his own corrections to the text that differed significantly from any of the known printed textual variants (*Intra sinum, iam carne praemortua* and *Intra hominem suum, iam carne praemortua*). Nevertheless, the text of this passage in the 1516 *Edition* is the same as the Lellian text: *Et ante hominem suum, iam carne praemortua*. In his other *scholia* to *Audi filia*, Erasmus repeatedly cited variants from the Lellian text as well as from the 1470 Schöffer edition.<sup>1791</sup> Erasmus followed the readings from the 1470 Schöffer edition for two of the passages indicated in the above *scholia* (*Volunt vivere, Et ad similitudinem dei unione foecunda*), and in one passage he followed the Lellian text (*Ut sum nomine virginali lucrosius*). To take one example from the above *scholia*, in the *scholion* beginning *Volunt vivere*, Erasmus cited two possible textual variants:

Some exemplars had 'to appear' (*videri*). Here, however, Jerome uses 'to live' in the sense of 'to live voluptuously' as in Catullus' 'Let us live, my Lesbia'. Further, he said 'agreeably and entertainingly' (*lepide et festive*) because they are wont to call those women who lead a more austere life disagreeable or morose.<sup>1792</sup>

We find the word *videri* in all of the 'Lellian texts'; that is, the 1508 Saccon edition, the 1497 Kessler edition and the 1470 Roman edition. Only in the 1470 Schöffer edition do we find the

<sup>1790</sup> See D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 36. See CWE 61, xxi. See ASD IX-2, 222. See note 938.

<sup>1791</sup> See Appendix XXV-XXVII for the *scholia* to *Audi filia* beginning *Volunt vivere, Ut sub nomine virginali lucrosius, Et ad similitudinem dei unione fecunda, Ut nemo quid postulet nemo non habeat* and *Essenos refert*.

<sup>1792</sup> See Appendix XXV for the *scholion* to the letter *Audi filia* beginning *Volunt vivere*: Quidam codices habebant, *videri*. Vivere autem hic vocat, voluptarie vivere, sicuti Catulus: 'Vivamus mea Lesbia'. Porro lepide ac festive dixit, quod illas tetricas et illepidas appellare soleant, quae severius vivant.

verb *vivere*, which is what we read in the 1516 *Edition*. Therefore, in this case we can with good reason suspect that Erasmus was referring in the above *scholion* to the 1470 Schöffer edition. As for the words ‘agreeably and entertainingly’ (*lepide et festive*), the 1508 Saccon and the 1497 Kessler editions read *lepidae festivae*, whereas the 1470 Schöffer as well as 1470 Roman editions read *lepide et festive*. The words *lepide et festive* appear in the 1516 *Edition*, so we can be reasonably sure that Erasmus consulted the 1470 Schöffer edition, one of the Roman editions or both in order to re-construct this passage. Although Erasmus often disagreed with the 1470 Schöffer edition and pointed out its mistakes, he showed respect for it in his *scholion* to the letter *Si cuncta corporis* beginning *Versuram quoque saepe*, in which he remarked: ‘some not at all unsatisfactory codexes mistakenly have put down *usuram* for *versuram*.’ For this passage, among all the above prior printed texts, only the 1470 Schöffer edition reads *usuram*, while the remaining editions read *versuram*. Therefore, we can conclude that in this example Erasmus most likely had the 1470 Schöffer edition in mind.

In the same way we can see that Erasmus most likely compared the Lellian and the Schöffer texts in his *scholia* to many other letters, including *Non debet charta* (see the *scholia* beginning *Aut barbarus semisermo; Aegypto ministrante commercia; Rusticitas vernacula; Quanto studio et amore (Pristinarum necessitudinum; Dicant etsi volunt grammatici; Scylleum renidens; Neophytorum haeresis), Quod ad te huc usque (Genera dicendi; Plautinae familiae), Frater Ambrosius (Et sine auctore; Hermagorae), Grandes materias (Caios), Schedulas quas misistis (Et futura angelorum; Et mi ultra non faciam), Si cuncta corporis (Quis clinicorum; Zod quippe; De Pelusio magnam; Versuram quoque saepe) Retulit mihi/Primum vos scire (Sed rosulum et in sordibus), Nihil Christiano felicius (Inserantur infructuosae; Censoriumque Romae) and Saepe et multum (Fragrare musco mure; Et vile in populis).* These twenty-three *scholia* found in ten different letters make up only a sampling of

the examples in which Erasmus clearly consulted both several Lellian texts as well as the Schöffer edition in order to come up with the possible readings that he put forward in his *scholia*. A closer look at the texts and at still ambiguous passages would surely reveal many more examples of the same practice.<sup>1793</sup> Already in this thesis we have seen that Erasmus mentioned the Schöffer edition and Roman edition by name in his *scholia*, and in the foregoing chapter we have seen strong evidence that he likely used the 1508 Saccon edition as a *Handexemplar* for his work for the 1516 *Edition*. My analysis of the above *scholia* can refine this knowledge. We can be confident in assuming that Erasmus used either the 1508 Saccon, the 1497 Kessler or another similar Lellian text in some instances, since he cited variants which appear in both these editions – whereas in the same passages the 1470 Schöffer edition and the 1470 Roman edition have the same readings that differ from the readings in the 1508 Saccon and 1497 Kessler editions.<sup>1794</sup> Also, we can be reasonably sure that at least in some letters, Erasmus consulted one of the Roman editions published by Sweynheim and Pannartz. For example, in the *scholion* to the letter *Nihil Christiano felicius* beginning *Creticum diceres Longinum*, Erasmus cited a textual variant that appeared only in the 1470 Roman edition (*criticum*), while in this passage the readings of the 1508 Saccon edition, of the 1497 Kessler edition and of the 1470 Schöffer edition all read *creticum*.<sup>1795</sup> In another example, the 1497 Kessler edition had a reading distinct from all the other editions in

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<sup>1793</sup> As I shall point out below, in some passages it is impossible to decide for sure whether or not a given reading came from the Lellian or Schöffer tradition, since very often the 1470 Schöffer and the 1470 Roman editions agree on a reading that differs from what we find in the 1508 Saccon and 1497 Kessler editions.

<sup>1794</sup> See, for example, Appendix XV for the *scholion* to the letter *Quoniam vetusto* beginning *Per homousiam* and *Ursinus*; Appendix XXV for the *scholia* to the letter *Audi filia* beginning *Volunt vivere, Et per humeros hyacinthina lena* and *Ut sub nomine virginali lucrosius*. See Appendix LV for the *scholion* to the letter *Frater Ambrosius* beginning *Hermagorae timiditate*.

<sup>1795</sup> See Appendix CXVII for the *scholion* to the letter *Nihil Christiano felicius* beginning *Creticum diceres Longinum*: *Nec hic locus videtur carere mendo. De Longino Cassio, et docto et divite, meminit Tacitus, quem ob invidiam opum, ad quas erat evectus maximas, Nero iussit interfici. Meminit et Iuvenalis, Longinum. Et magnos Senecae praedivitis hortos. Creticorum gens apud Romanos erat, inter primas nobiles ac potens. Unde idem Satyricus. Et metuas, ne tu sis Creticus aut Camarinus. Verum haud scio, an criticus legendum sit. Vocabantur enim Critici, docti quidam, qui de scriptis aliorum iudicabant, responenda ne essent in templo Apollinis, an reiicienda. Nam cum hoc quadrat quod sequitur: Censoremque Romanae facundiae.*

question, which the 1516 *Edition* followed in its text.<sup>1796</sup> The above evidence does more than show us that Erasmus most likely made use of all the above printed editions in his work for the 1516 *Edition*. It also shows that when faced with problematic passages in Jerome's letters, Erasmus and the Froben editors had frequent recourse to these editions and compared them in order to decide on their text. I have not carried out a statistical analysis of all of the *scholia* to these twenty-nine letters, but to my understanding Erasmus did not show a clear preference for either printed textual tradition. When there was disagreement between the Lellian and the 1470 Schöffer editions he sometimes followed the Lellian text, such as in the *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Ut sub nomine virginali lucrosius*, in which Erasmus cited both textual traditions and eventually chose to follow the Lellian text.<sup>1797</sup> In other examples he clearly followed the 1470 Schöffer edition, as he did in the *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Volunt vivere*.<sup>1798</sup> Such evidence points to a deep engagement with and use of some or all the above editions in the process of editing and of creating the 1516 *Edition*'s text and refines D'Amico's contention that 'Erasmus worked from a base text, usually printed, which he corrected with the assistance of available manuscripts [and printed texts]'.<sup>1799</sup> In their editorial work for the *Edition*, Erasmus and his colleagues undertook considerable correction with the help of codexes (*ope codicum*),<sup>1800</sup> but, as we have seen, it is very possible, even most likely, that these 'codexes' were not manuscripts but prior printed editions.

Second, in his *scholia* to over thirty of Jerome's letters that I have analyzed, Erasmus often cited possible emendations to the letters' text which we do not read in the 1516 *Edition*. We have already seen this practice in the *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Et ante hominem suum*. Time and again Erasmus cited variants in the *scholia* while in the 1516 *Edition*'s text,

<sup>1796</sup> See, for instance, Appendix XCIII for the *scholion* to the letter *Si cuncta corporis* beginning *Transivit Sichem*.

<sup>1797</sup> See Appendix XXV for the *scholion* to the letter *Audi filia* beginning *Ut sub nomine virginali lucrosius*.

<sup>1798</sup> See Appendix XXV for the *scholion* to the letter *Audi filia* beginning *Volunt vivere*.

<sup>1799</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 52.

<sup>1800</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 253-256.

the passage in question still agreed with one of the prior printed editions. In the *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Et ad similitudinem dei unione foecunda*, Erasmus bemoaned the corruption of this text and proposed to readers what he believed a better alternative:

What condign punishment do we call down upon the sophistical theologians who have corrupted everything? With no help from the exemplars I think the reading should be this: ‘drawing no germ of life from without but like the pearl fruitful in the singleness of God.’ Indeed a large pearl is also called an *unio*.<sup>1801</sup>

Although Erasmus proposed the variant *sed ad conchae similitudinem dei unione foecunda* in this *scholion*, the 1516 *Edition*’s text in this passage reads the same as it does in the 1470 Schöffer edition: *ad similitudinem dei unione foecunda*. We see similar examples of this practice in the texts and commentaries to the letters *Quoniam vetusto* (*Patrum servatur*), *Quod ad te huc usque* (*Genera dicendi*; *Studiosus magister*; *Omnes qui virgines permanserint*; *Et mussitamus adhuc*), *Grandes materias* (*Et Hesiodus nata*; *Assae*), *Sanato vulneri* (*Plagam doloris instaurat*), *Sebesium nostrum* (*Vel alterum vel secundum Iudaeum*), *Epistola tua* (*Ab aliis lacessitus*), *Schedulas quas misistis* (*Et puras attrectare maxillas*; *Iudas zelotes*), *Retulit mihi/Primum vos scire* (*Vestram evariare*; *Et omnes tecum*), *In veteri via* (*Soror Celerini patris*; *Et o lugenda res publica*) and *Nihil Christiano felicius* (*Creticum diceres Longinum*). In his analysis of Erasmus’ *Annotations* written for the 1516 Froben *New Testament*, some of which were written simultaneously with the *scholia* for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, Jerry Bentley describes several important examples in which ‘Erasmus expressed doubts about traditional texts, but decided to print them’.<sup>1802</sup> Erasmus did much the same in

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<sup>1801</sup> See Appendix XXVI for the *scholion* to the letter *Audi filia* beginning *Et similitudinem dei unione foecunda*: Quid dignum imprecemur sophisticis theologis, qui nihil non depravarunt? Non succurrentibus exemplaribus, ita legendum arbitror: ‘Nullo extrinsecus, cohaerente germine, sed ad conchae similitudinem, Dei unione foecunda.’ Siquidem gemma est unio, quam et margaritum vocant. Ea nascitur in conchis purissimis, non aliunde concepta, quam ex ipsis conchis, quibus coheret. Plinius e rore coelesti concipi putat, ac miram habere cum coelo cognationem. Lege Plinii caput trigesimum quintum libri noni. Porro quod ait: ‘Dei unione’, aut interpretando dixit per appositionem, ‘foecunda unione’, qui deus est, aut ‘unione dei’, cui coniuncta fuit infusione divinae naturae. Simulque sit allusio ad vocem unionis, quae gemmam significant. Paulo post, memor huius similitudinis, lego inquit de spinis rosam, de terra aurum, de concha margaritum.

<sup>1802</sup> Jerry Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 145-148.

the 1516 *Edition*, which he undertook with ‘the same zealous intentions’ as he took up work for the Froben *New Testament*.<sup>1803</sup> He regularly brought up textual variants in his *scholia* but, far more often than not, chose to stick to one of the two prior printed textual traditions.

Closely related to the above practice was Erasmus’ tendency in the *scholia* to propose conjectural emendations to words and to passages in the *Edition* and to leave their resolution open to the improvements of future scholarship. In the passages cited in the above paragraph, Erasmus voiced strong opinions about how the text might read but nonetheless did not change the text according to his opinions. In many other examples Erasmus put forward variants in his *scholia* with more doubt and qualification, using phrases such as ‘perhaps this passage should read’ (*fortasse legendum*) in order to introduce the variants that he proposed.<sup>1804</sup> We see this introduction in Erasmus’ *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Et ante hominem suum*, in which he ventured a guess as to what *ante hominem suum* might mean but was happy to leave the question open for further discussion by future editors.<sup>1805</sup> Later in the *scholion* to the same letter, *Et per humeros hyacinthina lena*, Erasmus proposed possible changes to the text with the qualifying word ‘perhaps’ (*forte*): ‘The passage was most corrupt in all the exemplars. Perhaps it should read: “And from their shoulders flutters perchance a mantle.”’<sup>1806</sup> The only notable difference between this passage in the 1516 *Edition*’s text and the text of the 1508 Saccon and 1497 Kesler editions, however, is that Erasmus used the word *volitans* rather than *volitent* in the sentence *Et per humeros hyacinthina lena forte volitans*,

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<sup>1803</sup> See Allen 396, 317-321: Non dissimili studio nuper dedimus Novum Instrumentum adiectis annotationibus nostris: cuius lucubrationis nuncupationem Leoni Pontifici Maximo tuaeque celsitudini communem facere visum est, quo novum opus duorum totius orbis summatum nomine tum munitius tum commendatius exiret in manus omnium.

<sup>1804</sup> For examples of the exact phrase ‘fortasse legendum’ see Appendix XXV; CV; CXXIV.

<sup>1805</sup> See Appendix XXV for *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Et ante hominem suum*.

<sup>1806</sup> See Appendix XXV for *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Et per humeros hyacinthina lena*: Hic quoque locus in omnibus erat depravatissimus. Forte legendum: ‘Et per humeros lena forte volitans. Nam lena pallium est foemineum ac delicatum. Forte ‘volitans’ dixit, quod non esset astricta sicut caeteris, sed temere volitaret, neglectum magis quam sanctimoniam indicans.

therefore agreeing with the 1470 Schöffer and Roman editions' reading. We see similar phrases and speculations in the *scholia* to the letters *Non debet carta (Aut barbarus semisermo; Aegypto ministrante commercia)*, *Quanto studio et amore (Solum pietatis genus)*, *Audi filia (Et nudi impatientia frigoris pedes; Ne inanis gloriae ardore, Et attilis geranopopa)*, *Frater Ambrosius (Ab uno usque ad quindecim)*, *Grandes materias (Et diversas bestias; Cunctasque Pannonias)* and *Si cuncta corporis (Quod magnam vinceret caritatem)*. In none of these examples did Erasmus or the Froben editors change the text according to the emendations proposed in the ten *scholia* to these six different letters. Combined with the examples cited in the foregoing paragraph, we can conclude that one of Erasmus' common practices in the *scholia* was to cite variants and to propose conjectures without changing the 1516 *Edition*'s text. This was an approach that Beatus also took in his later independent works of textual criticism.<sup>1807</sup>

From existing evidence we cannot really know the reasons for which Erasmus confined many of his possible corrections to the *scholia*. One possible explanation is that, at least in some cases, the text of Jerome's letters had already been printed and that Erasmus was writing his *scholia* such that they could coincide with this already printed text. According to this theory, if Erasmus sometimes or even usually wrote his *scholia* under such conditions, he would have been quite limited in what changes he could make after the printing was already underway. Therefore, he would have been able to propose his corrections and to make known his doubts only in the *scholia*. I find this explanation, however, unconvincing. Given the way in which the 1516 *Edition* formatted Jerome's letters, for some of them at least it would have been all but impossible to print the text and the *scholia* at different times. We should also keep in mind Petitmengin's observation that in the

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<sup>1807</sup> Pierre Petitmengin, 'La terminologie philologique de Beatus Rhenanus', in *Beatus Rhenanus*, 220.



early sixteenth-century printers and editors used a variety of methods in order to bring their work to the printed page and did not work in a consistent way even in printing one edition, especially one whose printing, like the 1516 *Edition*'s, stretched out over a year.<sup>1808</sup> Although the above explanation is possible in some cases, Dill finds it unlikely, and I trust his opinion. At all events, what we can say is that by citing possible textual variants and his own conjectures in the *scholia*, Erasmus did for Jerome's letters in the 1516 *Edition* what he had done in the 1516 *New Testament*: 'Beyond doubt or question...his discussions left sixteenth-century readers well informed with respect to the evidence for and against the texts.'<sup>1809</sup> Perhaps it is for such information rather than for Erasmus' far fewer changes to the text of Jerome's letters that readers such as Budé, Spalantinus and Cardinal Riario praised the *Edition* for its 'resurrection' of Jerome.

In the *scholion* to the letter *Grandes materias* beginning *Caïos*, Erasmus gave historical background in order to explain the two textual variants (*Caïos* and *Gallos*) found in the Lellian text and in the 1470 Schöffer edition. After weighing the two textual variants Erasmus concluded: 'I prefer what I read in the older exemplars, *Gallos*, not *Caïos*.'<sup>1810</sup> Of the texts at which we have looked, the 1470 Schöffer edition is the only text that read *Gallos*, so it is evident that Erasmus was referring to it as one of the 'ancient exemplars'. In conclusion of this chapter I would like to bring up an important example in which Erasmus almost certainly used a prior printed edition and called it a 'very old exemplar' (*pervetusto quodam exemplari*), which the *Collected Works of Erasmus* translates as 'a very old

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<sup>1808</sup> See Pierre Petitmengin, 'Comment on imprimait à Bâle au début du seizième siècle', in *Annuaire des Amis de la Bibliothèque Humaniste de Sélestat* 30 (1980): 106.

<sup>1809</sup> Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 148.

<sup>1810</sup> See Appendix LXVIII for the *scholion* to the letter *Quanto studio et amore* beginning *Caïos*: ...Sed mihi magis placet, quod in antiquis lego, Gallos non Caïos. Nam inter caeteros quos hic recenset Hieronymus, Cicero gallum quoque memorat, in dicta ad Sulpicium epistola. Eumque suum appellat, ceu familiarem.

manuscript’.<sup>1811</sup> Erasmus brought up the passage in question in his *scholion* to the letter *Quanto studio et amore* beginning *Cui nos morituros*. The reader might remember that Erasmus had asked Reisch for help with this very passage in his letter from Basel dated 14 September 1514: ‘In the letter to Heliodorus which begins *Quanto amore* there are various readings in the passage *Cui nos morituros relinquis* and what follows. Tell me, if it is not tiresome for you, what you think.’<sup>1812</sup> Erasmus asked for help also with the letters *Nihil Christiano* and *Petis a me*, remarking that ‘there are other [questions/problems] too; for everything is corrupt; but I have no leisure to get into detail’.<sup>1813</sup> Reisch had no advice for Erasmus, since he had no ‘corrected exemplars’ at hand,<sup>1814</sup> so Erasmus may have been left to his own devices or he may have simply waited until Reisch or others were able to help. Such details escape us, but in his lengthy *scholion* beginning *Cui nos morituros*, Erasmus remarked: ‘We have restored this passage, which was in more than one way confused and corrupted, from a very old exemplar (*pervetusto quodam exemplari*) as follows: “Only wait till we die and are buried (*Morituros expecta paulisper et sepeli*).”’<sup>1815</sup> Erasmus was right to observe that this passage was ‘in more than one way confused and corrupted’, since in all the

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<sup>1811</sup> CWE 61, page 120.

<sup>1812</sup> Allen 308, 33-35: In epistola ad Heliodorum cuius initium est, *Quanto amore*, varie legitur hic locus, *cui nos morituros relinquis? etc.* Aperi nobis, si molestum non est, quid tu sentias.

<sup>1813</sup> Allen 308, 46-47: Sunt et alia; quid enim ibi non depravatum? Sed non est otium de singulis scribere.

<sup>1814</sup> CWE 61 again translates *codices* as ‘manuscripts’ when it is by no means clear that Reisch was referring to manuscripts in this case. See Allen 309, 23-25: Nullus emendatorum apud me codicum est, nullas unquam feci annotationes, demptis dictionibus Hebraicis quae sunt in exemplaribus.

<sup>1815</sup> See Appendix IX for the *scholion* to *Quanto studio et amore* beginning *Cui nos morituros*: Hunc locum, non uno modo confusum ac depravatum, ex pervetusto quodam exemplari sic restituimus. Morituros expecta paulisper et sepeli. Forsitan et laxis uberum pellibus arata rugis fronte, mater antiquum referens Mammae, lallare, congeminet. Allusit autem ad carmen Persianum quod est in satyra tertia. ‘Ac cur non potius teneroque palumbo. Et similis regum pueris, pappare minutum poscis, et iratus Mammae lallare recusas? Pappare puerilis est vox, idem significans, quod edere. Plautus in Epidico, ‘quod pappet, dabitur’. Unde et puerilem cibum pappum vocant. Itidem lallare vox ea videtur, qua nutrix infantem, ad lactendum invitat. Porro Mammam antiqui matrem vocabant, ut aviam, tatham. Dicuntur autem a Persio in iuvenem delicatum, cui matris adhuc opus sit blanditiis.

above prior printed editions we find a wide range of variants, and even more and more remarkable variants in other prior printed editions such as the 1468 Riessinger edition.<sup>1816</sup>

Of especial interest in this case is one of the prior printed editions of Jerome's letters at which we have not yet looked in this chapter: that published by Johannes Mentelin in Strasbourg in the late 1460s. In the above passage, the text that Erasmus put together for the 1516 *Edition* is almost exactly the text that we find in the Mentelin edition. The only difference between the two readings is that in one clearly problematic passage the 1516 *Edition* reads *mammae lallare* whereas the Mentelin edition reads *mamma lactare*.<sup>1817</sup> Given the great variations in the textual tradition, the fact that these two texts are almost identical in all but punctuation is strong evidence that Erasmus used the Mentelin edition of Jerome's letters and that in this example, the Mentelin edition was in fact the 'very old exemplar' from which Erasmus restored the 1516 *Edition*'s text. My hope is that future scholars of the 1516 *Edition* will keep in mind not only Erasmus' possible use of the Mentelin edition but also the words that Erasmus used to describe this edition. I believe that it was from the Mentelin edition and from other 'old exemplars' such as the 1470 Schöffer edition that Erasmus drew variants which he grafted onto the Lellian text – most likely taken from the 1508 Saccon *Handexemplar* – in order to create the text of the 1516 *Edition*. In his description of early printing and editing, Timparano remarked that 'in the vast majority of cases, the *editiones principes* made by the Humanists were based on recent manuscripts, since these were easier

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<sup>1816</sup> 1468 Riessinger: Nunc et gerula quodam anus iam et nutricius secundus post naturalem pietatem pater clamat moriturus: 'Expecta paulisper et sepeli.' Forsitan et laxis uberum pellibus arata rugis fronte antiquum referens mamma lactare congeminet.

<sup>1817</sup> Please note that in this case both editions are cited with their original punctuation. See 1516 Edition I, f. 1r: Nunc et gerula quodam: iam anus: et nutricius secundus post naturalem pietatem pater, clamat: Morituruos expecta paulisper: et sepeli. Forsitan et laxis uberum pellibus mater: arata rugis fronte, antiquum referens mammae lallare, congeminet. 1468 Mentelin: Nunc et gerula quodam iam anus et nutricius secundus post naturalem pietatem pater clamat moriturus: expecta paulisper et sepeli. Forsitan et laxis uberum pellibus arata rugis fronte antiquum referens mamma lactare congeminet.

to get hold of and more comfortable for the typesetters to read'.<sup>1818</sup> In this chapter we have seen evidence that in their textual criticism for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, Erasmus and the Froben editors relied not on humanist manuscripts but on a wide range of printed texts of Jerome's letters which had been in circulation for almost fifty years. In the next chapter we shall see more evidence that the 1516 *Edition*'s text was widely corrected from the collation of prior printed texts.

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<sup>1818</sup> See Sebastiano Timparano, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, tr. Glenn Most (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 45. For the original see Sebastiano Timparano, *La genesi del metodo del Lachmann* (Firenze: F. Le Monnier, 1963), 15. We see the same observation in Kenney, *Classical Text*, 4-5. See also Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 69-75.

## PART TWO: CHAPTER XIV

### EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE 1516 *EDITION*

Despite Erasmus' reliance on the prior printed tradition, he undertook important and lasting revision of Jerome's letters. In his appraisal of the 1516 *Edition*, Husner remarked that 'without Erasmus' intervention, the explanatory material would not have been any more substantial than what we find in the Kessler editions or in volumes five through nine of the 1516 *Edition*'.<sup>1819</sup> We have good reason to agree. When Reisch wrote to Erasmus from Freiburg im Breisgau about 4 October 1514, he was delighted to learn that Erasmus was writing new introductions and notes to Jerome's letters,<sup>1820</sup> and we may suppose that theretofore neither he nor Amerbach had any developed project to add new commentaries to Jerome's letters.

As for the *Edition*'s remaining volumes, Beatus praised Johannes Amerbach for 'seeking out old exemplars and learned men who might restore the Greek phrases everywhere' in Jerome's commentaries, among whom Reuchlin and Cuno ranked foremost. Beatus added, however, that Cuno was a more skilful corrector (*felicior castigator*) than Reuchlin. According to Beatus, whereas Reuchlin depended on lexica to fill missing passages, or *lacunae*, in the text,<sup>1821</sup> Cuno followed 'the better way' (*meliolem viam secutus*) by 'diligently restoring from the remains of ancient codexes (*e vestigiis antiquorum codicum*) those things that were either missing or corrupted'.<sup>1822</sup> He also remarked that Erasmus

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<sup>1819</sup> Husner, 'Die Handschrift', 142.

<sup>1820</sup> Allen 309, 21-22.

<sup>1821</sup> For more on *lacunae* see Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 236-239.

<sup>1822</sup> See Allen I, page 63, lines 256-264: Pridem enim Ioannes Amerbachius absoutis Ambrosii Augustinique libris totum se comparaverat ad castigationem voluminum Hieronymi, undique conquisitis vetustis

himself was impressed by the Amerbach brothers' 'incredibly careful diligence in correcting'.<sup>1823</sup> Nonetheless, it must be remarked that aside from the 'restoration' of the Greek and the overzealous addition of Hebrew texts to Jerome's commentaries, which despite Sicherl's good beginnings still await serious and comprehensive scholarly analysis,<sup>1824</sup> volumes five through nine of the 1516 *Edition* do not look remarkably different from the 1497-1498 Venetian edition that Reuchlin, Cuno, the Amerbach brothers and other collaborators used as their base-text and *Druckvorlage*. Their introductory letters aside, the last five volumes of the 1516 *Edition* do not contain any remarkable additions to the commentary apparatus that we find in the Venetian edition.

Erasmus' *scholia* were without doubt an important addition to the transmission of Jerome's letters. In fact, they represented a breakthrough in Patristic scholarship, one on which later editors such as Mariano Vittori relied even while condemning it.<sup>1825</sup> In this last chapter I shall point out four outstanding features of Erasmus' *scholia* for the 1516 *Edition*. From this evidence we can better understand at least some of the reasons for which humanist contemporaries so enthusiastically received the 1516 *Edition*, even if Erasmus later qualified its achievements in his introduction to the 1533-1534 Chevallon edition of Jerome's works:

When I undertook the task of correcting his letters and then of illustrating them with *scholia*, I had not yet thoroughly understood their many-sided richness shored up by the supports of languages, studies and arcane letters...Therefore I confess that I was mistaken in many respects when I undertook this great task with neither the appropriate learning nor the carefulness this task deserved.<sup>1826</sup>

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exemplaribus, et doctis viris conductis qui Graecas dictiones passim restituerent; de quorum numero fuit Ioannes Reuchlinus iureconsultus, qui e lexicis vacuas lacunas replere conabatur; cui successit felicior castigator Ioannes Cono Norimbergensis, instituti Dominicani, qui meliorem viam secutus, e vestigiis antiquorum codicum ea, quae vel deerant vel erant depravata, diligenter reponebat. For background on Cuno see D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 47-49. For more discussion of the restoration of Greek passages in contemporary texts, see Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 295-299.

<sup>1823</sup> See Allen I, page 63, lines 271-273: Erasmo novo hospiti statim in aedes Frobenianas recepto placuit aeditionis nitor, sed inprimis incredibilis fratrum Amerbachiorum in castigando sedulaque diligentia.

<sup>1824</sup> See Sicherl, *Johannes Cuno*, 119-130.

<sup>1825</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 317-334.

<sup>1826</sup> Allen 2758, 1-12: Quanquam ab ipsa pueritia, non tam iudicio, quam arcano quodam naturae sensu divi Hieronymi scripta sum admiratus, eaque admiratio mihi semper cum accessione aetatis et si qua est

If we take this letter at its word – and despite Clausi’s theories I see no good reason for which we should not do so – we must then believe that Erasmus had hardly written any *scholia* before arriving at Basel in the latter half of August 1514.<sup>1827</sup> Keeping in mind the speed with which and the pressures under which Erasmus wrote them, the *scholia* become only more impressive for their learning and for their insights.

Firstly, in many instances Erasmus made important changes to the text of Jerome’s letters that we find nowhere in the prior printed tradition. He usually based such changes on historical and philological knowledge. In the *scholion* to the letter *Frater Ambrosius* beginning *Et totius mundi philohistoricus*, for example, Erasmus wrote:

This passage is undoubtedly corrupt. Some think that the reading ought to be ‘a very learned man’ [*polyhistor*], for that epithet had been added to the name of Appio, the grammarian who wove together the history of individual nations, according to Aulus Gellius, book five, chapter fourteen, or surely ‘very learned’ [*polyhistoris*], not to depart too far from the transmitted text. *Polyhistor*, or *polyhistoros*, is Greek for one who knows and recounts many things, for he previously said: ‘having knowledge of the times.’ I find the reading *philistoros*, that is, ‘eager for knowledge’, especially pleasing, for in Daniel, chapter nine, the prophet Gabriel says, ‘you are a man of ardent desires’.<sup>1828</sup>

Although modern editions insert a different Greek word in this passage,<sup>1829</sup> Erasmus was correct to identify textual corruption in this passage and to try to restore it by having recourse to the Greek. Whereas the other printed texts under consideration read *philostoricus* (1508 Saccon, 1497 Kessler) or *philohistoricus* (1470 Schöffner, 1470 Roman), none of them reads

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eruditionis accrevit, tamen cum illius epistolas tum castigandi tum scholiis illustrandi provinciam susciperem, nondum variam illam et ex omni linguarum, disciplinarum ac literarum recondita supellectile constructam opulentiam nondum penitus introspexeram. Quid enim est in ullo librorum genere, seu parvum seu magnum, seu sacrum seu prophanum, quod ille non habuerit in numerato? Itaque fateor me non uno modo peccasse, qui ad tam arduum negotium nec parem eruditionem nec iustam curam attulerim.

<sup>1827</sup> Allen 2758, 12-15.

<sup>1828</sup> See Appendix LV for the *scholion* to *Frater Ambrosius* beginning *et totius mundi philohistoricus*: Non dubium est, quin hic locus sit depravatus. Sunt qui legendum putent, *polyhistor*, id enim cognominis additum fuit Appioni grammatico, qui singularum gentium historiam contexuit. Author Aulus Gellius libro 5 capite 14. Aut certe *polyhistoros*, ne longius recedamus a scriptura. *Polyhistor*, sive *polyhistoros* graece dicitur, qui multa novit ac memorat. Praemisit enim, temporum conscius. Mihi potissimum arridet ut legamus *philistoros*, id est cognoscendi cupidus. Sic enim audivit a Gabriele, quia vir desideriorum es. Danielis capite non.

<sup>1829</sup> For Hilberg’s text see CSEL 54: 461, 4. This passage reads: *totius mundi φιλοῖστωρ*.

*philistoros* or anything resembling it. Therefore, it seems that Erasmus charted his own path in textual emendation, and in this case he did not hesitate to change the text in order to bring it into line with his philological insights. Erasmus was not the first scholar to consider the Greek text in Jerome's letters, since Bussi knew Greek fairly well and had even enlisted the renowned Hellenist Gaza to work on the texts of his Roman edition. But by providing commentary in which he explained his changes, Erasmus helped to open a scholarly dialogue about what was undoubtedly a corrupt passage. In a similar case, the *scholion* to *Litterae tuae* beginning *Et Attilio iudice*, Erasmus pointed out textual corruption and justified the change that he made to the text on historical grounds:

It would take a long time to explain in how many ways this passage has been corrupted, but nonetheless we have restored it from most reliable remains of the text. How much do good letters owe to that worst kind of men, that combine the highest arrogance with the greatest ignorance! Attilius was the son of the prince Marcus Attilius, who returned to suffer extreme tortures rather than to fail to carry out his oath to his enemy. He was a very harsh censor and marked out many knights together with his colleague Lucius Furius Philippus. Read the chapter of the censor's marks in second book of Valerius Maximus.<sup>1830</sup>

In this passage many other prior printed editions read *Attalo* (1508 Saccon, 1497 Kessler, 1470 Roman) instead of *Attilio*, and the 1470 Schöffner edition reads *apellamus at alii iudicem*. Later scholarship, however, has not confirmed Erasmus' assessment and correction of this passage based on his historical and literary knowledge.<sup>1831</sup> In the *scholion* to the letter *Schedulas quas misistis* beginning *Et mi ultra non faciam*, Erasmus again justified his change of the passage in question to *Et mu ultra non faciam* on historical and philological grounds.<sup>1832</sup> He also referenced his *Adages* for the reader's further edification. We see

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<sup>1830</sup> See Appendix XLVII for the *scholion* to the letter *Litterae tuae* beginning *Attilio iudice*: Prodigiosum dictu fuerit, quibus modis hic locus fuerit depravatus, quem tamen e certissimis vestigiis restituimus. Quantum debent bonae litterae, pessimo isti hominum generi, qui summam arrogantiam cum summa inperitia coniunxerunt. Attilius filius fuit M. Attilii reguli, qui maluit ad exquisita redire supplicia, quam vel hosti non praestare ius iurandum. Hic igitur censor erat acerrimus, ac multos equites Romanos gravi nota affecit, una cum suo collega L. Furio Philippo. Lege Valerii maximi librum secundum, caput de censoria nota. Nam ante dixerat, si in omnes scriptores censoriam accepit virgulam.

<sup>1831</sup> CSEL 54: 392, 6: a tali iudice.

<sup>1832</sup> CSEL 55: 129, 3: et mutum non faciam.



similar examples in the letters *Quod ad te huc usque (Dedicavere)*, *Retulit mihi/Primum vos scire (Sed rosulum et in sordibus)*, *Si cuncta corporis (Nec mirum)*, *In veteri via (Evirat virum; Quem quis prior efferret; Erunt duo in carnem unam)* and *Nihil Christiano felicius (Censoriumque Roma)*. In all these cases Erasmus broke from prior printed textual traditions and justified his corrections on historical and philological grounds. Although later scholarship has not always agreed with his assessments, it was important that Erasmus identified clearly corrupted passages and marked them out for scholarly discussion and examination. As he wrote of one passage in his *scholia* to the letter *Multi super hoc sermone* to Damasus: ‘If someone finds more probable reading, may he at once toss out my conjecture.’<sup>1833</sup>

Second, this analysis of Erasmus’ *scholia* confirms Timpanaro’s remark about Erasmus’ textual criticism for the 1508 *Adages*. For Timpanaro, it was not Erasmus’ insistence on the importance of older or original texts (*archetypi*) that set him apart from his contemporaries, but rather ‘his energetic affirmation of the right to correct a reading that appears erroneous without allowing oneself to be intimidated by the *consensus codicum* [consensus of the manuscripts or printed editions]’.<sup>1834</sup> In the *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Fletu lugentes quod nati sunt*, for example, Erasmus wrote:

Although the exemplars which I myself have seen nearly all agree, yet since the reading *lugentes* is not entirely consistent I would not hesitate to change it as follows: ‘who delight in the cries of infants lamenting (*lugentium*) that they are born as soon as they see the light of day’. Pliny also says that we begin life by crying. For the first sound from a man being born is wailing.<sup>1835</sup>

<sup>1833</sup> 1516 *Edition* IV, 55v: Quae apud Graecos ponitur.) Hic locus in omnibus exemplaribus ita depravatus est, ut non possim liquido conicere. Quamquam ex elementorum vestigiis ita legendum arbitror, δέκσεωσώς ἄνα, id est deprecationis, ut ἄνα, quae vox apud Graecos aliquando est obsecrantis, praesertim apud poetas. Verum hanc coniecturam meam protinus reiciat, qui probabilius aliquid invenerit.

<sup>1834</sup> Timpanaro, *Genesi*, 50. For the original see Timpanaro, *Genesi*, 21.

<sup>1835</sup> See Appendix XXVI for the *scholion* to the letter *Audi filia* beginning *Fletu lugentes quod nati sunt*: Quamquam fere consentiunt exemplaria, quae quidem ipse viderim, tamen quoniam omnino non consistit haec lectio, non dubitem mutare ad hunc modum: ‘Quos vagitus delectat infantium, in ipso lucis exordio fletu lugentium quod nati sunt,’ aut, ‘flentium quod nati sunt’. Sic et Plinius: ‘a fletu vitam auspicamur. Nam prima vox nascentis hominis, ploratus est.’

Despite the agreement of the prior printed texts that I have examined for this thesis, which all read *lugentes* in this passage, Erasmus changed the passage to *lugentium* in the 1516 *Edition*, without much justification for this change, simply because he believed that the accepted reading was ‘inconsistent’ with the rest of the text. Modern editions have a different reading for this passage,<sup>1836</sup> but Erasmus was correct to identify this passage as problematic despite the *consensus codicum*. We see the same willingness to change an unanimous textual tradition in the letters *Grandes materias* (*Phoenix*), *Si cuncta corporis* (*Dimittere loquebatur; Et matris dolorem*) and *In veteri via* (*Evirat virum*). In the last example, while Erasmus was willing to part from the *consensus codicum* (*consentiunt exemplaria*), later scholarship has ratified the text of the Mentelin edition, which reads *eiurat* instead of the 1516 *Edition*’s reading *eviratur* or the other prior editions’ reading *evirat*.<sup>1837</sup> Since Erasmus cited a *consensus codicum* about the reading *evirat*, it seems likely that at least for this letter, Erasmus had not consulted the Mentelin edition. Even if we have solid evidence that Erasmus had consulted this edition for other letters, it should not surprise us if he did not consult the Mentelin edition for all the letters. We cannot presume that Erasmus or other Froben editors undertook methodical and consistent collation of prior printed editions for all Jerome’s letters. What is more, in this very example Erasmus seems to have overlooked alternative readings in the 1508 Saccon and the 1497 Kessler editions, both of which read *evitat* in this passage, whereas only the 1470 Schöffer and 1470 Roman editions read *evirat*. In other examples Erasmus cited a *consensus codicum* even though editions that he had surely read, such as the 1470 Schöffer and the 1470 Roman editions, proposed the same alternative reading that he adopted for the 1516 *Edition*’s text. In the *scholion* to *In veteri via* beginning *Fervente*, Erasmus wrote:

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<sup>1836</sup> CSEL 54: 169, 2: fletu lugente quod nati sunt.

<sup>1837</sup> CSEL 56: 80, 12-13: Hierophanta apud Athena eiurat virum et aeterna debilitate sit castus.

All the exemplars have this reading. There is no doubt, however, that we should read *Fenennae*. Helchana had two wives, Anna and Fennena. Anna after a long time of sterility at long last bore Samuel, such a great man. This history is in the first chapter of the first book of Kings.<sup>1838</sup>

Both the 1470 Schöffer and the 1470 Roman editions, which Erasmus consulted at least sometimes, clearly read *Fenennae ubertate* for this passage.<sup>1839</sup> There are many possible explanations for Erasmus' claim in this *scholion*, but it is entirely possible that in this case he had consulted only the 1508 Saccon edition or the 1497 Kessler edition, both of which read *fervente ubertate*. What we can understand from these examples is that even though Erasmus had consulted all the editions cited above at certain points in his work for the 1516 *Edition*, this does not mean that he consulted them all for his work on each letter.

Erasmus did not hold back from applying a correcting pen to what he believed to be a corrupted text. All the same, at times in the *scholia* he kept to the *consensus codicum* even though he clearly believed the text to be corrupt. In his *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *Cereris ac Veneris*, Erasmus remarked:

I suspect that there is a corruption (*mendum*) here, even if in this case all of exemplars consistently have this reading. I believe that *Vestae* was originally written instead of *Veneris*. When some half-learned man, whoever he was, saw *Vestae* and did not find it in his *Catholicon*, he changed *Vestam* into *Veneris*.<sup>1840</sup>

In the 1516 *Edition*'s text, however, we read *Veneris* in this passage as we do in all the other printed editions under examination for this chapter. In another *scholion* to this same letter, *Quarum tibi abundans*, despite his belief that the text was wrong, Erasmus clearly had

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<sup>1838</sup> See Appendix CIX for the *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *Fervente*: Ita habebant exemplaria, quae viderim. Verum dubium non est, quin legendum sit 'Fenennae'. Helchana duas habuit uxores, Annam et Fenennam. Anna post diutinum tedium sterilitatis, tandem peperit Samuelem tantum virum. Historia est in primo regum libro capite I.

<sup>1839</sup> See CSEL 56: 87, 3-4: Unde et Anna prius sterilis Fennennae ubertate fecundior est...

<sup>1840</sup> See Appendix CVII for the *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *Cereris ac veneris*: Suspisor hic subesse mendum, etiam si adhuc modum constanter habent exemplaria. Arbitror pro Veneris scriptum fuisse, Vestae: quam vocem cum sciolus ille quisquis fuit, in suo Catholico non repperisset, Vestam mutavit in Venerem. Si quidem Cereri quoque a puris mulieribus sacra fiebant, adeo ut nefas esset, viros interesse.

reservations about contradicting an unanimous textual tradition. ‘If it were allowable to disagree with the consensus of the exemplars (*consentibus exemplaribus*)’, Erasmus wrote, ‘I would prefer that this passage read *abunde*.’ The 1516 *Edition*’s text, however, kept *abundans* in this passage, along with the four other prior printed editions in question. In the *scholion* to the letter *In veteri via* beginning *Olim a mari Pontico*, Erasmus remarked that despite the consensus of the exemplars, he believed the text to be corrupt and proposed an alternative reading. Nonetheless, the text of the 1516 *Edition* respected the *consensus codicum*, and it is interesting to note that in all three of the examples above, later scholarship has upheld the *consensus* that Erasmus observed.<sup>1841</sup> We see the same practice in at least two *scholia* to the letter *Quod ad te huc usque* (*Omnes qui virgines permanserint; Et mussitamus adhuc*). Erasmus was willing to challenge the *consensus codicum* when he thought it necessary, but sometimes he clearly showed reluctance to go against it.

For Erasmus, lack of consensus in the texts was not only evidence of textual corruption, it could also prove a helpful tool for textual criticism. Erasmus did, however, exaggerate at times how corrupt the textual tradition truly was. For example, in the *scholion* to the letter *Frater Ambrosius* beginning *Quae a principio amicitiarum fidem*, he claimed, ‘the corruption of this passage is clear...from the complete lack of agreement among the exemplars.’<sup>1842</sup> It is curious that for the passage, the 1516 *Edition*, the 1508 Saccon edition, the 1497 Kessler edition and the 1470 Roman editions all have identical readings, and only the 1470 Schöffner edition has a remarkably different reading. While I cannot explain the

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<sup>1841</sup> See CSEL 56: 81, 8: ut templo Cereris ac Veneris. CSEL 56: 83, 17-18: quarum tibi abundans imitatio. CSEL 56: 93, 2-3: non erant nostra, quae nostra sunt.

<sup>1842</sup> See Appendix LIII for the *scholion* to the letter *Frater Ambrosius* beginning *Quae a principio amicitiarum fidem*: Hunc locum esse depravatum, vel ex hoc liquet, quod exemplaria nulla inter se consentiunt. Forte sic legendum est: Quae a principio, probatae iam fidei fidem, et veteris amicitiae nova praeferbant argumenta. Apparet Paulinum in initio epistolae suae locutum fuisse de necessitudine sua quam habebat cum Hieronymo. Eam cum vetus esset, novis argumentis renovavit. Catalogorum exemplorum quae sequuntur eo pertinet, ne quis sibi statim vindicet scientiam sacrarum scripturarum, sed diu discat priusque doceat.

reasons for which Erasmus cited a ‘complete lack of agreement among the exemplars’ when most printed exemplars agreed, this is only one of many cases in which Erasmus remarked substantial lack of consistency between exemplars when this was not necessarily the case.<sup>1843</sup> Be this as it may, for Erasmus the disagreement of the codexes (let us say, the *dissensio codicum*) was an important arrow in his quiver of textual criticism. Not only did such *dissensio* allow Erasmus to identify corrupted passages, it helped him to correct them. Erasmus expressed this idea clearly in his introduction to the 1515 Froben Seneca edition when writing about the two corrupted copies then at his disposal: ‘One thing, however, helped me: they did not agree in error, as is bound to happen in printed texts set up from the same printer’s copy; and thus, just as it sometimes happens that an experienced and attentive judge pieces together what really took place from the statements of so many witnesses, none of whom is telling the truth, so I conjectured the true reading on the basis of their differing mistakes.’<sup>1844</sup>

Erasmus also showed a willingness to accept different readings as equally possible and valid. On the one hand, this seems odd, since Erasmus clearly believed in a true reading (*germana lectio*) that scholars could reach, at least sometimes, by means of diligent collation of exemplars. As he wrote in his *scholion* to the letter *Quod ad te huc usque* beginning *Dedicavere*: ‘Indeed from different corruptions, we easily determined the true reading (*germana lectio*).’<sup>1845</sup> In other examples we see that to determine the *germana lectio* was not

<sup>1843</sup> CSEL 54: 42, 4: quae in principio amicitiarum

<sup>1844</sup> Allen 325, 38-43: Illud tamen profuit quod non consentiebant errata, id quod accidere necesse est in his libris qui ex eodem exemplari formulis exciduntur. Proinde quemadmodum aliquoties fit ut peritus et attentus iudex e multorum testium oratione quorum nemo tamen verum dicat, rem colligat, ita nos e diversis mendis veram coniecimus lectionem.

<sup>1845</sup> See the *scholion* to the letter *Quod ad te huc usque* beginning *Dedicavere*: Dedicatur enim quod initiatur. Unde Graecis ἐγκαίμια dicuntur ab innovando. Locus hic mendosus habebatur: verum ex diversis mendis, facile germana lectio colligebatur.

always so easy for Erasmus,<sup>1846</sup> but he consistently promoted his belief in a ‘true reading’ that lay hidden beneath layers of textual corruption. For example, in the *scholion* to the letter *Quanto studio et amore* beginning *Pristinarum necessitudinem*, Erasmus wrote:

Some manuscripts read *necessitatum*. Each sense fits. If you read *necessitudinum*, understand it to refer to the feelings of friends whom he would have abandoned. But if you read *necessitatum*, interpret it to refer to the conveniences of life, which are lacking to those who dwell in the desert. We, however, read *necessitudo* instead of *necessitas*. Indeed the interpretation that refers to the feelings of friends is preferable.<sup>1847</sup>

In this example, the text for the 1516 *Edition* reads *necessitudinum* and therefore agreed with Erasmus’ preference as well as with the 1508 Saccon and the 1497 Kessler editions, whereas the 1470 Schöffer and 1470 Roman editions both read *necessitatum*.<sup>1848</sup> Likewise in the *scholion* to the letter *Frater Ambrosius* beginning *Hermagorae timiditate*, Erasmus granted validity to two possible readings: ‘Some exemplars have “boasting”’. Either meaning is supportable. Hermagoras was a rhetorician whom Cicero cites several times in his *De inventione*.<sup>1849</sup> In this case the 1516 *Edition*’s text agreed with the reading that we find in the 1470 Schöffer and the 1470 Roman editions, *tumiditate*, whereas the 1508 Saccon edition and the 1497 Kessler edition read *timiditate*. In another example that we have already seen, the *scholion* to the letter *Si cuncta corporis* beginning *Et matris dolorem*, when weighing the two possible readings *matricis* and *matris*, the latter coming from an unknown source, for

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<sup>1846</sup> See Appendix XLVII for the *scholion* to the letter *Litterae tuae* beginning *Absque praeceptore perfectus*: His quoque locus in exemplaribus varie ferebatur depravatus, verum ex litterarum vestigiis hinc et hinc collatis, non magno negotio, germana scriptura colligitur. Absque praeceptore perfectus, πνευματοφόρος, ἐνθεός καὶ αὐτοδίδακτος, id est, spiritu lymphatus, afflatus numine, et per se doctus. Sic et Hesiodus scribit se ab ipsis musis didicisse, et earum afflatu scribere. Et Homerus cantorem αὐτοδίδακτον appellat, quod non ex hominis institutione, sed ex afflatu dei canat.

<sup>1847</sup> See Appendix IX for the *scholion* to the letter *Quanto studio et amore* beginning *Pristinarum necessitudinem*: Quidam codices habebant, necessitatum. Uterque sensus quadrat. Si necessitudinum legis, intellige de affectibus amicorum, quos esset relicturus. Si necessitatum, de his accipe vitae commodis, quibus carent in Eremito versantes. Quamquam et necessitudinem pro necessitate legimus, verum magis placet, ut de affectibus accipiat.

<sup>1848</sup> CSEL 54: 45, 12: nolo pristinarum necessitatum recorderis

<sup>1849</sup> See Appendix LV for the *scholion* to the letter *Frater Ambrosius* beginning *Hermagorae timiditate*: Nonnulli codices habent tumiditate. Uterque sensus est tolerabilis. Hermagoras rhetor erat, quem citat aliquoties. M. Tullius in opere de inventione. CSEL 54: 464, 8: de Hermagorae tumiditate.

Erasmus both readings were ‘acceptable, even if *matris* is more elegant’.<sup>1850</sup> In this example, Erasmus did not hesitate to differ from the four printed editions in question, which all read *matricis*, and to put *matris* in the 1516 *Edition*’s text. D’Amico provides one likely explanation for Erasmus’ occasional willingness to accept a variety of readings as valid when he notes that for him, to correct Jerome’s text was first and foremost ‘practical: textual problems had to be solved in order to produce a clean text with which to instruct the public; above all, corrected texts were to provide a trustworthy basis for educational and moral reform’.<sup>1851</sup> Erasmus himself insisted time and again that his textual criticism was fundamentally practical. As he explained to Leo X:

I myself expect no profit from all my labours except that, thanks to my industry...the Christian life should receive re-enforcement from the works of Jerome. He will reward me generously for whose sake I bear the burden of this toil. More people will read Jerome if more people understand him, and all will read him more readily if he is approved by the vote of so great a pontiff.<sup>1852</sup>

Within two months Leo X wrote back to his ‘beloved son Erasmus’ and expressed his ‘agreeable impatience’ to see the volumes of Jerome, which, he hoped, might prove ‘a highway by which we might advance unhindered towards the restoration of true piety and virtue among men’.<sup>1853</sup>

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<sup>1850</sup> See Appendix XCIV for the *scholion* to the letter *Si cuncta corporis* beginning *Et matris dolorem*: Nonnulla exemplaria habebant, ‘matricis dolorem’. Utraque lectio tolerabilis, nisi quod argutior est ‘matris’, ut intelligas affectum maternum, quoniam de filiarum obitu, paulo ante meminit. CSEL 55: 338, 1-2: matris dolorem

<sup>1851</sup> D’Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 52.

<sup>1852</sup> Allen 335, 341-347: Ipse ex tantis sudoribus non alium expecto fructum quam ut nostra qualicunque industria Christiana pietas ex Hieronymi monumentis adiuvetur. Is abunde rependet premium in cuius gratiam hoc laboris desudo. A pluribus legetur, si fuerit a pluribus intellectus Hieronymus; sed et libentius legetur ab omnibus, si tanti Pontificis calculo fuerit comprobatus.

<sup>1853</sup> Allen 338, 1: Dilecte fili, salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem; 12-18: Utinam auctor ille summus bonarum non actionum solum verum etiam mentium, qui nos nullis insignibus meritis ornatos sola sua liberalitate et providentia ad hunc altissimum gradum produxit dignitatis amplissime, quemadmodum ea optare nos voluit quae ad optimum Christianae rei publicae statum faciunt et sunt idonea, ita viam muniat qua sit nobis expeditus cursus ad veram pietatem atque virtutum inter homines instraendam; 24-28: Nos et volumina divi Hieronymi tua cura elaborata iucunda quadam cupiditate expectabimus, et promissum tuum quo omnium studiorum tuorum fructus te nobis delaturum affirmas, in maximi muneris loco ducemus in eoque gratiam tibi sumus habituri. I have changed the CWE’s translation of ‘we could’ to ‘we might’.

Third, despite his undoubted belief in the power of correction by comparison of exemplars and by skilful conjecture, for Erasmus there were some corruptions that were, in the end, all but beyond repair.<sup>1854</sup> In one example Erasmus was not reticent about letting readers know his struggles with the passage in question and his ultimate inability to find a ‘true reading’. He wrote in the *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Et altilis geranopopa*:

This passage can scarcely be restored without help from the exemplars. From the traces of a faulty text I think it should read as follows: ‘What he likes is a savoury breakfast – a plump young bird commonly called a cheeper.’ This is that you may understand that he has in his view a sumptuous breakfast because of the savouriness of the plump young bird. It is commonly called a cheeper because cheeping is the voice of noisy birds, as Aristophanes also testifies. But whence comes the word *geranopopa* ‘crane-cheeper’? Some exemplars do not have it. Perhaps the reading should be γερανοπέπτα ‘roasted crane’, which at that time was considered a delicacy, or perhaps γερανοκόπτα ‘a crane-beater’, because in Greek a crane means also an instrument for grinding flour.<sup>1855</sup>

When Erasmus remarked that ‘some exemplars do not have’ this reading, he was likely referring to the 1470 Schöffer edition, which left out altogether the word *geranopopa*. In the 1508 Saccon, the 1497 Kessler and the 1470 Roman editions we find the word *geranopopa* in Latin letters. In the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus substituted a Greek text different from those we see in the above *scholion*, γερανοπίπης, for the transcription *geranopopa* that he found in many exemplars, which he tried to explain in the above *scholion*. Erasmus did not hide the fact, however, that this was merely his guess given a badly corrupted textual tradition. Even if later scholarship has not adopted Erasmus’ proposed solution to this troublesome passage, it has confirmed his belief that this passage was corrupted, a view at which he arrived even though it did not leap out from contemporary printed editions whose readings mostly agreed.<sup>1856</sup> For Erasmus, although he ideally wished to restore the text, it was also important

<sup>1854</sup> Allen 396, 361-364.

<sup>1855</sup> See Appendix XXVI for the *scholion* to *Audi filia* beginning *Et altilis geranopopa*: Vix locus hic restitui possit, citra suppetias exemplarium. Ex vestigiis mendosae scripturae, puto sic esse legendum: ‘Prandium nidoribus probat, altilis, vulgo pipizo nominatur, ut intelligas id demum prandium illi lautum esse, quod altitium habeat nidorem. Et ob id pipizonem vulgo dictum, quod pipi, vox sit avium corticalium, ut testatur et Aristophanes. Sed unde geranopopa? Nam quidam codices non habent. Forte legendum, ‘γερανοπέπτα’, ‘geranopepta’, a coquendis gruibus, quae tum in delitiis erant.

<sup>1856</sup> CSEL 54: 186, 5-6: prandium nidoribus probat et ‘altilis’, ‘γέρων’ vulgo ‘ποππύζων’ nominatur.



simply to expose what were clearly errors and to submit such errors to the judgement of the republic of letters. This had a practical purpose. As he wrote to Warham in his introduction to the Jerome edition: ‘And if I have done nothing else, at least my attempt will spur on some others not to accept hereafter indiscriminately whatever they may find in their books, however badly corrupted by one imposter after another or masquerading under some false title, and to read it and to approve it and to cite it as an oracle.’<sup>1857</sup> Erasmus’ hope was that ‘all good scholars would devote all their forces to the task of restoring as far as possible to its original purity whatever in the way of good authors has survived after such numerous shipwrecks’, but only such scholars ‘equipped with honesty, accuracy, judgement and readiness to take pains as he is with erudition’.<sup>1858</sup> In many of his editions published with Froben, including the 1516 Jerome *Edition* and the 1515 Seneca edition, Erasmus thought it important that he was providing material on which later editors could build. And for Jerome as well as for pagan Classical authors such as Seneca and Suetonius, Erasmus’ first ‘critical’ editions with Froben did indeed comprise the groundwork on which later scholarship was based.

During my first afternoon spent at Selestat’s Humanist Library when on my way from Basel to Paris in January 2011, I happened to be sitting across from a woman who was then finishing her doctoral thesis at the University of Strasburg, Sandrine de Ragueneil. Although we had never met, shortly after Rhenanus’ copy of the 1516 Jerome *Edition* was brought to our table, we struck up a conversation during which I was able briefly to explain to her the

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<sup>1857</sup> Allen 396, 364-369: Illud summo adnixa studio consecuti sumus, ut non multum supersit. Et ut nihil aliud, certe noster conatus nonnullos exstimulaturus est, ne posthac nullo delectu quicquid in libris offenderint quantumvis corruptum a quocunque impostore, quocunque titulo subditum, amplectantur, legant, approbent ac velut oraculum citent.

<sup>1858</sup> Allen 396, 369-372: Atque utinam eruditi omnes totis viribus in hoc incumbant negotii, ut quicquid nobis ex tot naufragiis utcunque reliquum est bonorum authorum, id quoad fieri potest pristinae integritati restituatur. Nolim tamen hanc adire prouinciam nisi qui non minus fide, religione, iudicio curaueque polleant quam eruditione; quod nulla sit acerbior bonorum voluminum pestis quam semidoctus aut oscitabundus aut praeceps aut infelici iudicio castigator.

project that I had in mind for my doctoral thesis, of which nothing had been written at the time. She soon brought to my attention Erasmus' attempts to figure out the meaning of a Greek word in Jerome's introductory letter to his commentaries on the prophet Ezekiel, which begins *Ezechiel propheta* and is found near the beginning of the *Edition*'s fourth volume.<sup>1859</sup> For help with this problem Erasmus wrote to his friend Jakob Wimpfeling and asked for his interpretation and for his translation of the word *senecia*. Wimpfeling, upon getting this request, turned to Paul Volz, Abbot of Hügshofen.<sup>1860</sup> Volz wrote back directly to Erasmus in a letter from Selestat dated 25 November 1515, in which he explained his thoughts about possible translations of the word *senecia* but was unable to offer any clear conclusions. It is worth citing this letter in full for what it reveals to us about collaborative work on the 1516 *Edition*, as well as about an Alsatian monk's work with a passage that still troubles scholars almost five hundred years later:

When I read the letter which you sent on the eve of Martinmas [10 November] to our common friend Jacob Wimpfeling, which was brought me by another friend John Witz, I discovered that, after expressing excessive thanks for the very small service I had rendered you, you wish to know what the passage is in the preface to Ezekiel which I said had so often puzzled me. It comes at the end of the preface that normally stands in all Bibles before Ezekiel, where it says (to within a few words at least, for I have no text by me) something like this: 'But if my rivals sneer at this too, I fear they will suffer the fate (as Greek more expressively puts it) of being called *'phagolidori'*, which means 'eaters of *seneciae*'. What *senecia* means I do not know, and after long search I have failed to find it, except in Lyra and the *Mammotrecus* and *Catholicon* and suchlike, who produce on this word the most arrant nonsense. *Senecio* is a plant in Pliny's *Natural History* book twenty-five, last chapter, which he says is called in Greek *erigeron*; but how this should come in here, I cannot say. Now this Greek proverbial expression φαγωλοίδοροι, which is much clearer if we write λοιδοροφάγοι, on the analogy of κρεωφάγοι and ιχθυοφάγοι, could also be rendered in Latin by one newly coined word *convincivori*, or *calumnivori*, which would mean gluttons for abuse, malice-mongers, men whose mouths are always full of abuse and quarrelling. That is the best my thick head can do, and you must make of it what you can. Have a care for your health, so that you may be a blessing to many people. Farewell, you and all my friends, and the sweet child Jesus have you in his keeping.<sup>1861</sup>

<sup>1859</sup> 1516 *Edition* IV, 11v.

<sup>1860</sup> For more on Volz see *Contemporaries* 3, 417-418.

<sup>1861</sup> Letter from Paul Volz (1515) in Allen 372, 6-22: Is locus est in calce eius praefationis quae in omnibus Bibliis Ezechielis volumini praemitti consuevit, ubi secundum aliqua saltem verba (nam modo textus abest) hoc pacto legitur: 'Quod si aemuli mei et hunc subsannarint, vereor ne illis eveniat quod Graece significantius dicitur, ut vocentur phagolidori, id est manducantes senecias.' Senecia quid sit ignoramus et post multam investigationem nunquam invenimus, praeterquam apud Lyram, Mammotrectum, Catholicon et id genus hominum, qui super hoc vocabulo bullatas adferunt nugas. Senecio herba est Plinio lib. xxv. cap. ult. Nat. Histor., quam Graece erigeron vocari dicit; sed quo modo huc pertineat nescimus. Porro Graecum hoc adagium φαγωλοίδοροι, quod item λοιδοροφάγοι, quo modo dicuntur κρεωφάγοι et ιχθυοφάγοι, planius intelligimus, et posset Latine uno ac novo verbulo interpretari, convincivori calumnivori, id est conviciorum heluones,

In his *scholion* to this letter beginning *ut phagoloedori vocentur*, Erasmus did not mention Volz's help. He did, however, admit to having no clue what the word *senecia* meant. After bringing up many attempts of prior commentators to make sense of this word and mocking the 'most arrant nonsense' of Nicholas of Lyra, Mammotrecus and the *Catholicon*, Erasmus believed that it would be much better to admit to not knowing something than to repeat the varied and plainly wrong interpretations of this word found in the works of prior commentators.<sup>1862</sup> Despite his reservations, in this *scholion* Erasmus still did hazard his best guess: 'even though the most ancient exemplars are of no help here, I believe that Jerome wrote *φιλολοιδογοι*, whose job was to backbite and to attack, as though they did this on account of their own sickness rather than because others deserved their attacks.'<sup>1863</sup> Erasmus made it clear, however, that this was merely conjecture. After her analysis of how Erasmus and Paul Volz each tried to tackle this tricky passage, Sandrine de Ragueneil concluded:

Volz and Erasmus represent two different philological tendencies: Erasmus tries, without success, to explain the copyists' glosses in order to find out the true text, and finishes by putting forward his own conclusions; the other, Paul Volz, rejects wholesale the commentaries as nonsense and starting from the Greek, which is understandable, he puts forward a Latin neologism in order to translate a Greek neologism. Volz's method seems more to conform to the science of philology as we practice it today in

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calumniarum voratores, quibus ora conviciis ac iurgiis iugiter opplentur. Et isthaec quidem iuxta pinguem nostram Minervam tute boni consule.

<sup>1862</sup> 1516 *Edition* IV, 11v: Ut phagoloedori vocentur.) Non paulo facilius est docere scripturam hanc non carere mendo, quam restituere quod depravatum est. Primum si φαγολοιδόροι, compositum est ex φαγεῖν et λοιδορία, ne consistit quidem compositio, neque enim dicimus φαγόλωτος sed λωτοφάγος. Iam quod adiectum est, quod est manducantes senecias, palam est ab Hieronymo non fuisse adscriptum, sed ab alio quopiam Graece perito, qui subito quod scriptum offendit vertit utcumque. Deinde scribe quispiam ex convitiis fecit senecias. Pudet enim reffere quod hic nugentur interpretes de seneciis: quibus senecia in plures vertitur formas quam apud poetas Empusa. Senecia immundum est animal, senecia labium senis, senecia rubrum illud quod est sub aure piscis, sic enim illi loquuntur, senecia labia corrosa, senecia illusa piscium, quod equidem quid sit non intelligo, senecia saliva defluens per genas, quasi vero ex oculis defluat saliva. Verum his nihil interest inter mentum et genam, immo ne inter ventrem quidem et caput. Senecia mus est, sed immundus, senecia herba est. At quanto simplicius erat dicere, nescio, quam ad hunc nugari modum? Nam quod Plinius meminit herbae senecionis, quae Graece dicatur ἐρίγρον, non video quid pertineat ad λοιδορίαν, quae vox et ipsa graeca est.

<sup>1863</sup> 1516 *Edition* IV, 11v: Proinde quod unum licet, quandoquidem exemplaria vetusta nihil opitulantur, coniiicio scriptum fuisse *φιλολοιδοροι*, quibus studio est calumniari et carpere, velut id suo morbo faciant, non merito aliorum.

that he does not try to hazard a guess for the word *senecia* but rather tries to clear up what it could mean. This point deserves to be highlighted, even though Erasmus only took it partly into account.<sup>1864</sup>

This example shows not only two different approaches of contemporary scholars undertaking textual criticism for the *Edition*, it also shows Erasmus' reliance on a colleagues and scholars throughout the Rhineland as he undertook 'to restore' Jerome from his supposed corrupted oblivion. That Erasmus did not practice 'modern' philology should not surprise us. For him, textual criticism was, after all, a 'practical activity' whose goal was to create a 'relatively accurate and readable product and not an involved conjectural structure. That his 'linguistic and moral theories did not mandate an highly articulated textual critical method' is plain in his *scholia* to the 1516 Jerome *Edition*.<sup>1865</sup>

What we also see clearly in this example is that when Erasmus needed help in his efforts to understand and to interpret challenging passages in Jerome's letters, he did not turn only to ancient sources such as Pliny and the Church Fathers and his modern humanist friends, many of whom belonged to religious orders. He also turned to the *Catholicon* and to other Mediaeval glosses and works that he often mocked – but perhaps not as often as he used them. In 1512 his soon-to-be colleague Beatus wrote the introductory letter to, and may have helped to edit, Johannes Amerbach's edition of the Mediaeval churchman Gratian's *Decretum*.<sup>1866</sup> In this introductory letter, Beatus compared Gratian to the great ancient teachers:

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<sup>1864</sup> Sandrine de Ragueneil, 'Les lettres de Paul Volz à Beatus Rhenanus (1522-1542): édition, traduction et commentaire' (Doctoral thesis, University of Strasbourg, 2012). See 'Synthèse 4: Paul Volz ou le défi de la science au XVIe siècle': Volz et Erasme représentent deux tendances philologiques: l'un tente d'éclaircir les gloses des copistes pour essayer de retrouver le texte authentique, sans succès, et finit par proposer ses propres leçons (Erasme), l'autre rejetant en bloc les gloses comme des non-sens et partant du grec, qui est compréhensible, propose un néologisme pour rendre un néologisme (Volz). La démarche de Volz nous semble conforme à la science philologique telle que nous la pratiquons aujourd'hui, dans la mesure où Volz ne cherche pas à donner une solution hasardeuse au terme *senecia* mais s'attache bien davantage à éclaircir ce qui peut l'être. Ce point mérite d'être souligné, bien qu'Erasme ne l'ait qu'en partie pris en compte.

<sup>1865</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 145.

<sup>1866</sup> D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 155-156. His dedicatory letter is dated 13 April 1512. See BWBR 26.

I believe that it is fitting for a Christian, and especially for a priest, to research carefully what our lawgivers, or rather the interpreters of our law (for our only lawgiver is Christ, the living book of divine wisdom), I mean Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, Hilary, Isidore and the worshipful troop of sovereign pontiffs, have reminded us in their writings: it is from the deepest sanctuary of their teachings and their decisions that the most wise father Gratian...collected, after Yves, Bishop of Chartres, this magnificent volume of *Decretum* under the reign of the Emperor Henry IV.<sup>1867</sup>

Before Erasmus' arrival at Basel, Johannes Amerbach, Johannes Froben and their fellow printers and colleagues at Basel published many other editions of Mediaeval commentaries. To take one outstanding example, in a mere ten years, from 1498-1508, Johannes Froben and Johannes Petri printed no fewer than three editions of the famous and widespread Mediaeval commentary on the Scriptures, the *Glossa Ordinaria*. Conrad Leontorius edited the last of their editions of the *Glossa Ordinaria* whilst simultaneously at work on 1516 Jerome *Edition*, among other projects for Johann Amerbach.<sup>1868</sup> Henk Jan de Jonge has shown in a compelling article that Erasmus made no small use of the *Glossa* in his work for the 1519 Froben *New Testament*, using it as a source of historical information and Patristic writings and even to identify variations in the Greek text of the Scriptures.<sup>1869</sup> Such use of the *Glossa* and other Mediaeval sources such as Nicholas de Lyra's *Postilla* should not surprise us. Erasmus had known these sources since his youth, and we have seen that during his first stays at Basel Erasmus relied on and trusted the criticism and the counsel of local scholars such as Ludwig Ber, who graduated first in his class from that bastion of Mediaeval learning and scholasticism, the Sorbonne. Ber's noteworthy scholastic credentials enabled him to play an important role at the Amerbach-Froben press, from collaborating with Erasmus and other

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<sup>1867</sup> BWBR 26, 39-46: ...Christianum hominem decere arbitror et maxime sacerdotem non segniter investigare quae nostri legislatores, immoverius legis explicatores (solus enim legislator noster Christus, vivens divinae philosophiae liber), Hieronymus, inquam, Augustinus, Ambrosius, Gregorius, Hilarius, Isidorus et veneranda summorum pontificum cohors, suis nos scriptis commonuere: ex quorum penitissimis doctrinarum sacrariis et veterum sanctionibus, sapientissimus pater Gratianus gente (ut volunt) Etruscus post luonem Carnutensium antistitem, hoc egregium Decretorum volumen, sub imperatore Caesare Hernico IV, congescit.'

<sup>1868</sup> See Henk Jan de Jonge, 'Erasmus und die *Glossa ordinaria* zum neuen Testament', in *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, 56 (1975): 53-54, note 10. There editions were printed and published in 1498, 1498-1502 and 1506-1508.

<sup>1869</sup> See Henk Jan de Jonge, 'Erasmus und die *Glossa ordinaria*', 60-62.

Froben editors and from showing a keen interest in the newest humanist editions.<sup>1870</sup> The scholarly environment in Basel at this time was still marked by Mediaeval learning, and it stands to reason that Erasmus, even while condemning what he believed to be its excesses and its errors, would make use of its undoubted achievements. In Erasmus' index to the 1519 *Annotations* to the New Testament we see many moments in which Erasmus cited Mediaeval precedent in order to treat the Scriptures. De Jonge's article is a great beginning to the study of this question, and in recent years have scholars begun to investigate more carefully Erasmus' great and lasting debt the insights and to the accomplishments of Mediaeval churchmen.<sup>1871</sup> We still await, however, a thorough and comprehensive investigation of Erasmus' use of Mediaeval sources for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. I regret that I have been unable to undertake this investigation for this thesis, but I suspect that a careful investigation of the *scholia* and especially of the last four volumes of the 1516 Jerome *Edition* would reveal that the Froben editors borrowed widely from common Mediaeval sources and commentaries.

In addition to a better understanding of Erasmus' critical methods for the 1516 *Edition*, we can understand from the evidence presented in the two foregoing chapters as well as in the appendix to this thesis that the text of the 1516 *Edition* was not radically different from texts in prior printed editions. We should not underestimate or overestimate the importance of Erasmus' service to the transmission of Jerome's letters and to their later scholars and editors.<sup>1872</sup> He and the Froben editors built on the achievements of prior scholars and put together an attractive, readable and very well-organized text. What is more, they made obvious corrections and established a basis for future textual criticism that took place

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<sup>1870</sup> Such editions include a copy of Erasmus' 1505 edition of Valla's *Annotations* that he acquired at some point between 1504-1512, now at the Colmar City Library. This edition is catalogued under shelf-mark XII 2378.

<sup>1871</sup> See, for example, Max Engammare, 'Les héritiers d'Hugues de Saint-Cher', in *Les Instruments de travail à la Renaissance*, 107-131.

<sup>1872</sup> Pabel treats this topic in great detail in *Herculean Labours*, 222-248; 317-343.

under material and intellectual circumstances quite different from those which they knew. In his introductory letter to Warham, Erasmus contended that ‘it is a river of gold, a well-stocked library, that a man acquires who possesses Jerome and nothing else’.<sup>1873</sup> ‘He does not possess him, on the other hand,’ warned Erasmus, ‘if his text is like what used to be in circulation, all confusion and impurity’.<sup>1874</sup> We have seen that ‘what used to be in circulation’ was not nearly as corrupt as Erasmus would have us think, and it is somewhat hard for me to believe that contemporary humanist readers were not aware of this. But although Jerome’s letters and other works had been in wide circulation for years before the appearance of the 1516 *Edition*, we can consider the latter work to be not only the first ‘collected works’ of Jerome, but also the first ‘critical edition’ of his works. While the prior printed editions that we have examined in this thesis do not figure largely in the modern criticism of Jerome’s letters, some five hundred years later Erasmus’ *scholia* and the text of the 1516 *Edition* are still considered a milestone in the letters’ transmission.<sup>1875</sup> Cardinal Riario was therefore right to observe that with the 1516 *Edition*, Erasmus had erected ‘a noble monument’ that would preserve Jerome’s name as well as Erasmus’ own.<sup>1876</sup>

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<sup>1873</sup> Allen 396, 358-359: Aureum flumen habet, locupletissimam bibliothecam habet quisquis unum habet Hieronymum. See Jardine, *Man of Letters*, 67-73. Jardine uses this quote as a headline to her discussion of how Erasmus became Jerome’s ‘revived physical embodiment’ through his Patristic scholarship.

<sup>1874</sup> Allen 396, 359-361: Atque hunc rursum non habet, quisquis habet cuiusmodi ferebatur antehac undiquaque confusum et contaminatum.

<sup>1875</sup> See Lardet, in *Contra Rufinum*, 219-234.

<sup>1876</sup> Allen 340, 40-41: Nam tu praeclarum illi monumentum erexisti, tui quoque nominis aeternam memoriam servaturum.

## PART TWO: CONCLUSION

After having looked at the 1516 Jerome *Edition* in comparison with earlier editions of Jerome's letters, we have seen time and again that the work of Erasmus and of other Froben editors, both known and unknown,<sup>1877</sup> was anchored in a tradition of over fifty years of printed editions of Jerome's letters, as well as in well-established methods and presentations of contemporary Patristic scholarship. It was also rooted in a much longer-standing tradition of transmitting and of interpreting these letters. In the beginning of this thesis' second part we saw Erasmus' spirited advertisement of the 1516 *Edition*'s unique contributions to Patristic scholarship, as well as his derision of its 'most corrupted' forebears.<sup>1878</sup> In his introductory letter to Warham, Erasmus included a summary of historical causes of the contempt, neglect and corruption of good letters since Antiquity, and claimed that although many writers had been 'so mutilated and adulterated that those who perished outright might seem fortunate', such corruption was 'far more monstrous in Jerome than anywhere else'.<sup>1879</sup> Now we can understand that such rhetoric was at best excessive, and at worst wrong and misleading. We can also better appreciate how truly 'astounding' was Erasmus' claim that before the 1516 *Edition*, Jerome's works were 'so much corrupted and mutilated that one might think he was now not so much revised as published for the first time'.<sup>1880</sup> Such rhetoric was important, however, for Erasmus' larger project to foster the betterment of contemporary Christian practice and discipline by making Church Fathers such as Jerome accessible to a

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<sup>1877</sup> See Dill I, 189.

<sup>1878</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 60. Allen 334, 99-104.

<sup>1879</sup> Allen 396, 44-94. Allen 396, 95-102: His rebus factum est ut tot orbis lumen, quorum titulos duntaxat nec id sine lachrymis legimus, funditus interierint: et si quos contigit suis superesse fatis, hi sic modis omnibus depravati sunt, adeo truncati contemeratique, ut felices videri possint qui perierunt. Atque id profecto cum mihi vehementer indignum videtur in omnibus eruditibus, tum longe indignissimum in Hieronymo; cuius tam multae tamque eximiae dotes promerebantur ut vel solus et totus et incorruptus servaretur.

<sup>1880</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 60. Allen 333, 64-66: Excuditur iam dudum divus Hieronymus totus, immo renascitur, antehac adeo depravatus ac mutilus ut nunc non tam restitutus quam primum aeditus videri possit.



wider audience.<sup>1881</sup> In this thesis we have seen examples in which readers of the 1516 *Edition*, ranging from Budé to Frederick the Wise's chaplain, largely mirrored Erasmus' rhetoric in their praise of the *Edition*'s accomplishments. We can conclude that at least in many cases, Erasmus' advertisement strategy was not without its desired effect, and 'no chorus of protest arose to challenge Erasmus' claims to have resuscitated Jerome' and to have ushered into print what we might as well consider an *editio princeps*.<sup>1882</sup>

'I heartily approve that works falsely ascribed to Jerome and spurious pieces should be separated from others that are really his',<sup>1883</sup> wrote Reisch to Erasmus in late 1514. When undertaking initial research for this thesis I gathered considerable material for an analysis of the second volume of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*, in which Erasmus placed in quarantine spurious letters attributed to Jerome. In the end, however, this material does little more than corroborate Pabel's conclusions that although style was among Erasmus' most important criteria for establishing the authenticity of a given text, 'it was not the only criterion on which Erasmus based his judgements...Sure signs of forgery were anachronistic word usage, the lack of references to Jerome's correspondence or to a particular spurious letter in the genuine letters and attributions in manuscripts to various authors for the same text'. Pabel has also noted that Erasmus knew of prior editors' descriptions of letters as spurious and 'invoked the judgement of the Roman, that is Bussi's, edition, to support his case for the inauthenticity of a letter in praise of virginity'.<sup>1884</sup> Since Pabel has already treated this question in sufficient length and detail, I chose not to include analysis of such commentaries in this thesis.<sup>1885</sup> Nonetheless, we should bear in mind that Erasmus himself ranked his separation of true from

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<sup>1881</sup> Allen 334, 107-110.

<sup>1882</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 113. For a more complete treatment of the advertisement for the 1516 *Edition*, see Dill I, 238-268.

<sup>1883</sup> Allen 309, 6-8: Placet quam maxime ut quae falso Hieronymo tribuuntur, similiter et adulterina, ab aliis quae vere illius sunt segregentur.

<sup>1884</sup> Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 159.

<sup>1885</sup> See Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 142-170. See also Clausi, *Ridar voce*, 33.

false letters among the most important achievements of the 1516 *Edition*, opening a way in which ‘ignorant rubbish’ would ‘no longer circulate under the name of so incomparable a man’.<sup>1886</sup> For the next Jerome edition that Froben published in 1524-1526, Erasmus continued his work on the *spuria* in Jerome’s works, and re-organized the *Edition* in order to put them in the fourth volume.<sup>1887</sup> His ongoing engagement to identify and to quarantine spurious works was also a model for his later editing of the works of other Church Fathers such as Augustine: to purge the spurious was indeed ‘central to Erasmus’ sense of his calling as a Christian scholar’.<sup>1888</sup> In Visser’s analysis of Erasmus’ *censurae* of spurious works attributed to Augustine for the 1529 Augustine edition, we see many of the same features that we remark in the 1516 *Edition*’s second volume, including the ‘technique of identifying works...mostly based on historical and stylistic arguments’, ‘a highly personal tone’ in his *censurae* as well as ‘positive judgements’ of certain works which, albeit spurious, nonetheless held edifying content.<sup>1889</sup> As Visser has observed about Erasmus’ editing for the 1529 Augustine edition, I can confirm that in the 1516 *Edition*’s second volume, ‘far from being the invisible editor’, Erasmus ‘is markedly present in the critical apparatus’.<sup>1890</sup> ‘To show that in this I was guided by judgement and not caprice’, Erasmus wrote to Leo X of his work on the *spuria* for the 1516 *Edition*, ‘I have added prefaces and critical essays to tell the reader the principles which I have followed’.<sup>1891</sup> Anyone who reads Erasmus’ *censurae* in the 1516 *Edition*’s second volume will also come immediately face-to-face with their ‘highly personal tone’. Pabel was certainly right to cite Erasmus’ reflections in his foreword to the 1516 *Edition*’s first volume, in which Erasmus remarked that even if it might not matter all

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<sup>1886</sup> See, for example, Allen 334, 116-119: Supposititia et adulterina, quae quidem bona pars est, in suum relegavimus volumen; ut nec desideraret aliquid avidus magis quam eruditus lector, nec rursum indoctissima blateramenta tam incomparabilis viri titulo ditius circumferentur. See also Allen 335, 282-290.

<sup>1887</sup> See Allen 1453, 1-33.

<sup>1888</sup> Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 43.

<sup>1889</sup> Visser, *Reading Augustine*, 40-42.

<sup>1890</sup> Visser, *Reading Augustine*, 42.

<sup>1891</sup> Allen 335, 288-290: Atque id ne audacter magis quam iudicio fecisse videremur, praefationibus et censuris additis, quid in his secuti simus lectorem docuimus.

that much if Plautus' tales (*fabulae*) were wrongly attributed, 'in the case of sacred writers and pillars of the Church...from whom popes and theologians derive as from oracles their teachings on war, on the sacraments, and on the most serious matters', to attribute letters correctly was 'of the greatest importance'.<sup>1892</sup> It was through his and the Froben editors' efforts and others that 'such a distinguished doctor could be given back to the world'.<sup>1893</sup>

In conclusion of this thesis' second part, I would like to bring to the attention of readers more *trilinguis* ('trilingual'; that is, knowing Latin, Greek and Hebrew) than I an area where further research on the 1516 Jerome *Edition* is needed and, from what I have been able to see and to understand, would be likely to yield interesting and unexpected fruits; that is, Erasmus' and the Froben editors' claim to have restored the Greek and the Hebrew passages found in Jerome's letters.<sup>1894</sup> The 1516 *Edition* was not the first printed edition of Jerome's letters to include Greek passages, which we find in the 1508 Saccon, the 1497 Kessler and the early Roman editions. By 1514 Erasmus was one of contemporary Europe's most skilled practitioners of Greek, but it is still unclear how much it was truly his hand at work when it came to 'restoring' Greek elements for the 1516 *Edition*. This is to say nothing of the Hebrew. Erasmus himself forswore even the most basic competence in this area,<sup>1895</sup> and there were likely few at the Froben press who could ably work with this language, including the Amerbach brothers, about whose knowledge of Hebrew we know rather little.<sup>1896</sup> We have already seen that in a 1513 letter to Johannes Amerbach, the converted Spanish Jew Mathias Adrianus claimed that even the celebrated Hebraists Cuno and Reuchlin were not up to the

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<sup>1892</sup> 1516 *Edition* II, f. 3v: At dixerit aliquis, quid tantopere refert, cuius titulum habeat liber, modo bonus? Id fortassis in Plautinis fabulis, non ita magni referat. Caeterum in sacris viris et ecclesiae columnis, unde pontifices ac Theologi velut ab oraculis sua, de bello, de sacramentis, deque gravissimis rebus sumunt decreta, plurimum opinor referet.

<sup>1893</sup> Allen 335, 235-236: Videbam facinus quidem pulcherrimum, si nostra cura doctor tam eximius orbi restitueretur.

<sup>1894</sup> Allen 334, 114-116.

<sup>1895</sup> Allen 324, 24-33.

<sup>1896</sup> Dill I, 203.

task of editing the Hebrew words in Jerome's works, and it is hard to doubt that the Amerbach brothers' knowledge of the Hebrew was greater than that attained by these two lights of contemporary German scholarship.<sup>1897</sup> To my knowledge, we still await a detailed study of how the 1516 *Edition* set about 'reconstructing' or 're-creating' the Greek and the Hebrew texts found within Jerome's letters, polemical tracts and commentaries on the Bible. One place to begin would be the *scholia* that I have assembled in the appendix to this thesis. In many of these Erasmus treated the 're-birth' of the Greek text, and hands abler than mine would surely be able to draw important conclusions from them by comparing Erasmus' methods with those followed by earlier humanist scholars.<sup>1898</sup> In the letters that I have chosen to examine, Erasmus used his knowledge of Greek in order to treat the text of the letters *Quoniam vetusto*, *Christiani interdum*, *Litterae tuae*, *Frater Ambrosius*, *Paulus Apostolus*, *Grandes materias*, *Sebesium nostrum*, *Schedulas quas misistis*, *Si cuncta corporis*, *Retulit mihi/Primum vos scire*, *In veteri via* and *Saepe et multum*. The letter *Si cuncta corporis* is especially interesting since it also includes Hebrew texts in its *scholion* beginning *Zod quippe*. Comparing these texts with prior printed editions would doubtless show once again that Erasmus and the other Froben editors had achieved something truly remarkable with the 1516 *Edition*, but something as rooted in and dependent on an older textual tradition as it was, indeed, truly remarkable.

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<sup>1897</sup> See AK 477, 13-18. See Dill I, 162.

<sup>1898</sup> Rizzo, *Lessico filologico*, 295-299.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS:

*Verum operi longo fas est obrepere somnum.* ‘In the course of a long work it is allowable for sleep to steal over the writer.’<sup>1899</sup> As we have seen, both Giovanni Andrea Bussi and Erasmus used these words from Horace’s *Ars Poetica* in order to describe their own editorial activities, including their work on Jerome’s letters. At the end of this thesis, I too should ask the reader’s forgiveness for moments when sleep may have crept over me during my studies of Erasmus’ scholarship and the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. I hope that my moments of dozing and my slips of scholarships have not taken too much away from the primary sources, and I hope that these sources have done most of the important talking.

Having arrived at this work’s end, I shall share a more general appraisal of what I think we can take away from it. From the evidence presented in this thesis we have arrived at a more precise knowledge of Erasmus’ activity as an historian. As Benedetto Clausi pointed out in the early 2000s, Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome* was a small work when compared with Erasmus’ great undertaking to edit and to organize Jerome’s letters for the 1516 Froben Jerome *Edition*, which I would not hesitate to call the first reasonably complete and ‘critical’ scholarly edition of Jerome’s works. I also believe that Erasmus wrote the *Life* in great haste. Any conclusions that we can draw about Erasmus’ ideas about history or methods of history-writing based on the *Life*, one of his rare forays into the genre of history, must take into account the time when, the historiographical context in which and the *Edition* for which he wrote it. In my summary of existing secondary literature about Erasmus’ *Life of Jerome* we have seen general scholarly consensus about the great importance of the *Life* and several extravagant claims about what it represented. Even such a careful and skilful scholar as Peter

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<sup>1899</sup> Horace, *Ars Poetica* 360.

Bietenholz has described Erasmus as ‘another Columbus’ in history and implied that his *Life* was in many ways the discovery of new historical worlds. From the sources presented in this thesis, such claims are absolutely untenable.<sup>1900</sup> Not only do such claims misrepresent Erasmus’ work, they belittle the complexity and the sophistication of prior humanist scholarship in Renaissance Italy as well as the accomplishments of Mediaeval letters.

In this thesis we also have seen some of Erasmus’ activity as an editor for the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. Although my work may have not turned out to be the exhaustive investigation of the content, the construction and the intentions of Erasmus’ commentaries for the 1516 Jerome *Edition* for which Ueli Dill called in his 2004 doctoral thesis, I hope to have made some substantial steps in this direction.<sup>1901</sup> Now we know for sure that as an editor, Erasmus worked in the same way as many of his Renaissance forebears. Much as did the patron-saint of Renaissance printing, Aldus Manutius, Erasmus and the Froben editors preached their ideas of textual criticism more than they did, or could, practice them.

At this point it is worth asking what broader importance these findings do, in fact, have. To be honest, I could not have continued this work for three years had I been only intent on trying somehow to outstrip the scholarship of my far more learned elders, nor does the ‘fine print’ of how Renaissance printers and editors worked especially interest me. What does interest me most is the process of preserving, discovering, re-discovering and promoting the European Classical Tradition, which I also believe to have been Erasmus’ foremost concern for most of his later career. In this thesis I have emphasized continuities between Mediaeval and Renaissance scholars more than ruptures, in part because a tendency to read rupture into Renaissance humanists such as Erasmus still survives. I do not think it

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<sup>1900</sup> Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula*, 154.

<sup>1901</sup> Dill I, 2.

outrageous to claim that many educated and learned people in today's so-called Western nations believe that before the Renaissance, superstition and darkness reigned over European intellectual life. This idea reflects the rhetoric of Renaissance humanists and later propagandists of 'Enlightenment' and 'Whig History' more than historical fact.

In this conclusion I shall risk some polemic, inspired in part by Erasmus, by his colleagues and by his own humanist heroes, who were also by no means above it. By now generations of renowned scholars and historians, many of them not at all confessional, have emphasized that all was not superstition and darkness before the Renaissance. It seems to me that for Italian scholars in particular, the nineteenth-century concept of *renaissance*, first coined by the great French historian Jules Michelet (1798-1874), has never managed to take full hold – most probably because living in Italy makes important continuities in the fabric of European intellectual and cultural life hard, if not impossible, to overlook. In addition to emphasizing such continuities in language, scholarship, culture and cult, I am hardly the first to remark that European intellectual life became in many ways more obscurantist after the spread of supposedly 'liberating' Renaissance humanist literary work and scholarship. To take only one example, there is quite simply no denying that witch-hunting and killing was a Renaissance rather than a Mediaeval phenomenon, whatever precedents to it we might find. In the former age, according to some widely accepted beliefs, many Europeans had been liberated from Papal authority's superstitious bonds and were well on their way to modernity because of their exposure to secularizing Classical literature and learning. But in this same age of Renaissance accusations of sorcery and witchcraft which probably would have been laughed at or even punished by ecclesiastical courts at the thirteenth-century Sorbonne became life-and-death matters for many Europeans, and especially for women. While studying at the *Herzog August Bibliothek* in autumn 2012, during my morning runs in the

town and its surrounding countryside, I often passed by the *Gerichtsstätte im Lechlumer Holz*, where those accused of witchcraft were judged and often killed in the reign of the *Herzog August Bibliothek*'s founder, Julius zu Braunschweig-Lüneberg. Such judgements continued under his descendants. The superstition that underlay these trials was not only the stuff of the unlearned, but reached the highest ranks of contemporary government and included remarkable supporters of humanist scholarship, such as Julius. It made its way to the New World and was famously described in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

I began my formal study of history under the wing of Professor John Marshall at the Johns Hopkins University, and under the shadow of his teacher, J. G. A. Pocock. As an undergraduate I was strongly impressed by the most well-known work of Professor Pocock's own teacher, Herbert Butterfield's *The Whig Interpretation of History*, first published in 1931.<sup>1902</sup> Put in one sentence, Herbert Butterfield's goal was to raze beliefs that contemporary, or 'modern', political, economic and cultural developments and arrangements represented the apex of long and unbroken 'progress' – beliefs representing the opposite extreme of a conservatism or 'Toryism' which stresses continual and uninterrupted decline from an imagined Golden Age. 'Whig History' once informed and shaped much historical study, including the history of the Renaissance. Notwithstanding the importance of Butterfield's powerful attack, 'Whig History' has not died out entirely. To take one outstanding example, the enormous recent success of Stephen Greenblatt's *The Swerve* has shown that 'The Whig Interpretation of the Renaissance' – the idea that the Renaissance represents the triumph of 'secular' scholarship over a blinkered Catholic Church and European civilization's decisive break from a hopelessly benighted Mediaeval past – still needs more nails driven into its coffin. If my thesis has managed to drive one or, even better, a few nails into this coffin, I would be happy even if it achieves little or nothing else. I would

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<sup>1902</sup> Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: Bell, 1931).



be happy because ‘The Whig Interpretation of the Renaissance’ is a profound misunderstanding of the European past that has equally serious implications for the present and for the future.<sup>1903</sup> In a beguiling narrative that flatters our modern sensibilities, it encourages and perpetuates an insidious ‘Whig’ idea of progress. This idea would have us believe that whatever the bumps in the historical road, the engines pushing forward the modern world are pushing us towards a better and a more human future.

Erasmus and his humanist colleagues understood that civilization can fall apart and that poorly constructed and intellectually and spiritually misguided civilization can do more to limit human potential than to help men and women more fully to realize it. So did Erasmus’ Classical role-models. For all Jerome’s misgivings about the pagan Classical world and its capital, Rome, no lament was more sincere and heartfelt than his when he wrote of the sack of the Eternal City by Alaric’s armies in 410: ‘My voice cleaves to my throat, and sobs interrupt me as I dictate this letter. The City that once possessed the whole world has now been captured.’<sup>1904</sup> For Jerome the consequences of this event were self-evident: ‘If Rome perishes, who then is saved?’<sup>1905</sup> Rome did come perilously close to perishing. To say nothing of the knowledge and technical expertise forever lost in the centuries to follow the fateful years surrounding 410 AD, Winston Churchill aptly summed up the extent of civilization’s loss when he remarked in his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* that after the collapse of Roman Britain, even the Islands’ well-to-do and powerful did not know such basic Roman luxuries as daily bathing until well into the latter half of the nineteenth century. In enthusiasm for the history of textual criticism and transmission, we can easily forget how

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<sup>1903</sup> For an important reflection on this problem, see Constantin Fasolt’s ‘Hegel’s Ghost: Europe, the Reformation and the Middle Ages’ in *Viator* 39 (2008): 345-386.

<sup>1904</sup> Jerome, Letter 127, 12: Haeret vox, et singultus intercipiunt verba dictantis. Capitur Urbs, quae totum cepit orbem; immo fame perit antequam gladio, et vix pauci qui caperentur, inventi sunt.

<sup>1905</sup> See Letter 117, 16: Potentiam Romanae urbis, ardens poeta describens, ait: ‘Quid satis est, si Roma parum est?’ Quod nos alio mutemus elogio ‘Quid salvum est, si Roma perit?’

important such seemingly mundane material realities were for scholars and scholarship. Having prepared parts of this thesis whilst on military operations in Afghanistan, I can vouch for the fact that serious study becomes hard without at least some basic creature comforts. It is in large part thanks to the efforts of generation after generation of scribes and scholars throughout Late Antiquity, the 'Dark Ages' and the Mediaeval period, who often worked in extremely challenging material circumstances, that some of the Classical Tradition's greatest achievements survived until the Renaissance. It is not clear to me that the material circumstances of scholarship had improved much by Erasmus' time, and I would guess that much contemporary scholarship in Erasmus' day was carried out in dreadful cold, by limited candlelight and most probably under the influence of quantities of alcohol that would send most modern scholars to hospital. I do not make this last claim glibly. Not long ago it impressed me to hear from a Venetian nobleman now well into his 60s that even in his relatively privileged family, many men of his grandfather's generation drank themselves silly with grappa on most winter nights. They did this in in part in order to deal with the cold. Leaving room for exaggeration, this observation did leave me wondering how much drinking, both on and off the job, took place at Froben's press during the creation of the 1516 *Edition*.

By emphasizing continuities in scholarship between Antiquity, the Mediaeval period and the Renaissance, I do not wish to belittle the scholarship of Erasmus and of his humanist colleagues. Instead, my hope is that from a better understanding of what Erasmus and other humanist scholars did and did not do, we can better understand what changes truly took place in Erasmus' lifetime. What we do see is that Erasmus took the new technology of print and pressed it into the service of the Classical Tradition and Christian humanism. Born within a few years of Johannes Gutenberg's death in 1468, Erasmus grew up in a world in which printed books and manuscripts lived together side-by-side. At this time many thoughtful and

extremely learned men, such as Johannes Trithemius and Giorgio Merula, had considerable doubts about the new technology of print and about its effects on scholarship.<sup>1906</sup> Trithemius, despite the fact that he printed many books and collaborated with Johannes Amerbach, even wrote a book in praise of scribes and against what he believed to be the relatively shallow work of printers, *De laude scriptorum (In Praise of Scribes)*. Erasmus, however, enthusiastically took up the new technology of print and never looked back to wonder about a manuscript world that could have been. Part of Erasmus' genius was to use the new technology of print in order to promote the Classical Tradition throughout Europe, and this in a way that proved as effective as it was far-reaching. When Erasmus saw his first text into print in 1495 for Robert Gaguin's *De origine et gestis francorum compendium*, outside of Italy, few among Europe's rich and famous cared much about so-called humanist culture and literature. Erasmus himself was an unknown episcopal secretary in his late twenties or early thirties, coping with a student's poverty appropriate for the Latin Quarter, where he lived. By the time he died about forty years later, a basic grounding in the Classical Tradition had become a *sine qua non* for all wishing to appear educated, and kings and cardinals wrote to Erasmus, the illegitimate son of a small-town Dutch priest, with the highest respect, if not with deference. Although I disagree with Lisa Jardine's belief that Erasmus helped to usher in secularized ideas about history and scholarship, I believe that she understood and presented better than most one aspect of Erasmus' genius: he was, without any doubt, a great publicist.

Today many of us can download for free from many places in the world, and in a few seconds, manuscripts that Renaissance scholars such as Poliziano, Erasmus and Beatus Rhenanus could never have dreamt of seeing, much less consulting every day. Even while stationed in Kabul for three months in summer 2009, I was able to download copies of the 1516 Jerome *Edition*. My investigations for this thesis would have been practically and

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<sup>1906</sup> See Kenney, *Classical Text*, 17.

financially impossible without the Internet and without online resources probably beyond the dreams of early modern humanists, and now made free to the public by institutions such as the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* – financed in part, to give credit where credit is due, by multi-national corporations such as Siemens. For perhaps only twenty years now, the Internet has been an important part of academic, scholarly and public life. To put this into perspective, it took more than fifty years from Gutenberg's first trials at printing in Germany until the printed book clearly broke from the manuscript tradition and created something new, making way for remarkable changes in scholarship, science and society. In the early 2010s, we have the privilege of witnessing a change in the technology of communication and of scholarship that the world has quite simply not seen for about 500 years.

For those who are committed to the European Classical Tradition and who believe in the value of its re-discovery, its interpretation and its transmission, this privilege comes with a duty to work so that this Classical Tradition has a place in the new worlds of communication and that it takes again an important place in European culture and in cultures closely tied to and interested in it. This would be entirely appropriate and does not have to ignore the reality that our societies have become more multi-cultural, at least in some ways. Whereas technology and material prosperity have opened up hitherto unheard-of possibilities in scholarship, I believe that we lack one crucial ingredient that humanist scholars of the Renaissance had – conviction. Erasmus, much as many humanists before and after him, believed with few qualifications, if any, that the European Classical Tradition was not only extraordinarily valuable in and of itself, but a necessary foundation for good belief, good thinking and the sane organization of society. Such conviction might embarrass some scholars today, but without it I have a hard time seeing how the Classical Tradition will ever have more than the limited academic interest it has today. This would be unfortunate, for I

believe that if Western nations today are to escape a range of seemingly insurmountable crises, they need a change in culture and in mindsets comparable to what we saw in Erasmus' lifetime. They need the Classical Tradition, and they need scholars, politicians, economists, lawyers and soldiers convinced in its value and in its ability to help us to lead better lives and to build a more human future. They need another Erasmus.

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